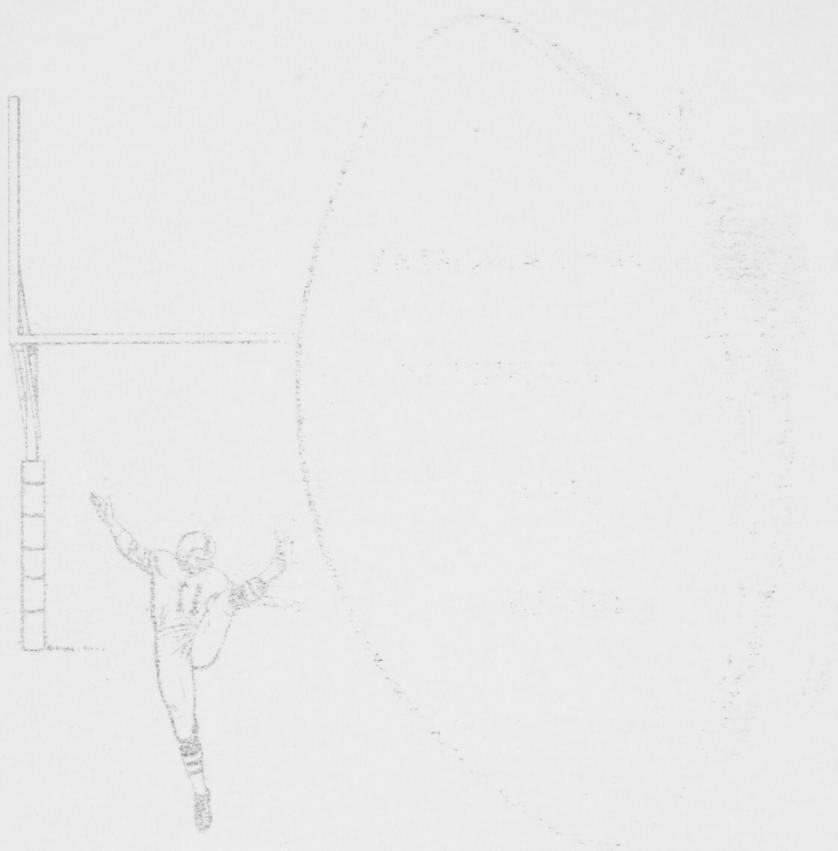


SASKATCHEWAN AMATEUR FOOTBALL UNION



THE NEW YORK HAWKERS FOOTBALL UNION

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Preface . . .

Over the years there has been ever-increasing evidence for the need for coaches clinics and manuals. This manual grew out of a need as expressed by amateur football coaches and the experiences of the football coaching staff at the University of Saskatchewan in their work with Football clinics.

The publication is a result of the co-operative efforts of the University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon Campus), the Provincial Youth Agency and the Department of National Health and Welfare who provided assistance through the Federal-Provincial Agreement for Fitness and Amateur Sport.

In making this manual available to the Saskatchewan Amateur Football Union, it is our hope that it will assist them in their program and prove a valuable resource to the many volunteers who are dedicated to serving youth.

W.G.W. Tuck,
Executive-Director,
Provincial Youth Agency.

THE
TECHNIQUES AND DRILLS
OF
TWELVE MAN FOOTBALL

by

W. W. Bolonchuk
D. Q. Marisi
H. A. Quinney

FOOTBALL COACHES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN HUSKIES

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The information contained in the following text is designed to assist both coaches and players by enhancing their present football program. We believe that the material is unique in that it is based on 12-man football and the techniques of each of the offensive and defensive positions are fully described. Drills to practise specific techniques of each segment of the offense and defense are presented, however no attempt has been made to present the entire Huskie offensive or defensive systems. Rather our approach is simply a presentation of parts of our system to illustrate the progression through, techniques and drills of offense and defense and the criteria which we used in developing this system. Although this criteria is presented as we were confronted with the situation in the W.C.I.A.A., the basic components are applicable to leagues or teams at any level of competition. The techniques, drills and system presented in the following chapters are flexible enough to be adapted to any level of competition. For example, high schools in Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw are now using the information either with a balance or unbalanced line and all of the drills are designed to practise good basic football.

The general plan of the book includes a chapter by chapter consideration of each facet of our daily practise schedule (Appendix B). That is, our practise begins with specialists drills. The techniques and drills employed to practise these specialties are presented in Chapter 2. The next aspect of the practise considers fundamental drills which are basic to all positions and these drills and their techniques are presented in Chapter 3. Our next practise phase concerns our four team units and are considered in Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8. Chapter 6 combines the work of the offensive line and offensive backs whereas Chapter 9 combines the work of the force unit and contain unit. Our team work is done in the last portion of the practise and drills employed during this time are also described in Chapters 6 and 9. Appendix D describes a number of fun drills which are employed as the last drill in each practise session. The fun drill was set up and is designed to contribute to the conditioning of the team as well as their morale and to complete the practise on a humorous note.

Chapter 10 integrates some aspects of our passing game with consideration for criteria established in developing the passing game in our league.

We expect our athletes to arrive in the fall at a high enough level of conditioning to step right into practise and begin learning techniques of their particular positions and of the offensive and defensive systems. A pre-season


conditioning program is forwarded to each player eight weeks in advance of the beginning of the season. Appendix A describes the three phases of this pre-season conditioning program.


Appendix B outlines the daily practise schedule for our first two weeks of camp. A check list of time spent on particular fundamentals is included as Appendix C. It includes six phases of the game, that is, a general consideration of time, time for practising kicking, individual play, drills, defense and the passing game. We employ the check list to insure that an equitable distribution of time is given to all facets of the game.


SUMMARY

In presenting this material the authors hope that this book will serve to stimulate interest in football for both player and coach and aid or contribute to future success. We extend an invitation to the reader to contact the coaching staff at the University of Saskatchewan for any additional information or specific aids to your football program.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Saskatchewan Youth Agency in making the publication of this book possible.


 OFFENSIVE BACKFIELD COACH

 OFFENSIVE LINE COACH

 WINGBACK


 FLANKER


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
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
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
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
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 STRONG SIDE TACKLE

 SHORT SIDE GUARD

 STRONG SIDE GUARD

 SHORT SIDE TACKLE


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 RECEIVER


 PASSER


 KICKER

 HOLDER

 BALL CARRIER


 DUMMY


 FORCE UNIT COACH


 CONTAIN UNIT COACH

 SAFETY

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
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
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
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 TACKLE

 INSIDE LINEBACKER

 INSIDE LINEBACKER

 MIDDLE GUARD

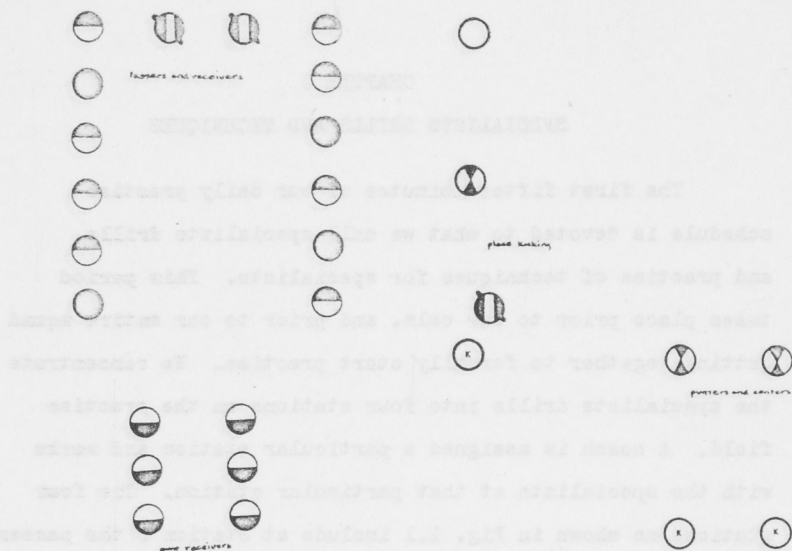
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CHAPTER 2

SPECIALISTS DRILLS AND TECHNIQUES

The first fifteen minutes of our daily practise schedule is devoted to what we call specialists drills and practise of techniques for specialists. This period takes place prior to our calcs. and prior to our entire squad getting together to formally start practise. We concentrate the specialists drills into four stations on the practise field. A coach is assigned a particular station and works with the specialists at that particular station. The four stations as shown in Fig. 2.1 include at Station 1 the passers and receivers; at Station 2 the centres and punters; at Station 3 the place kickers and at Station 4 the punt receivers. The practise involved in these four stations deals with the very basic elements of techniques peculiar to the particular specialists. No intricate drills are attempted in this period, simply an execution, correction and repetition of the technique for each of the specialists at their station. We require each of our specialists to report to a station at the specified time and during the early season drills this is a daily routine. However, as the season progresses certain specialties may not be employed each day but scheduled upon request of a coach or player, depending on his performance in a game situation. A fifth station, the extra specialists



practise, involves the practise of any individual technique deemed necessary by a coach or requested by the players and is scheduled at random by individual coaches during the specialist drill time.

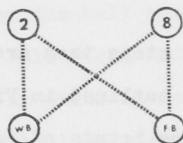
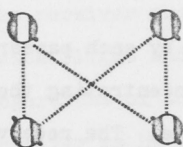
Station #1 Passers and Receivers

The practise of techniques at this station begins with just a little stationary drill where the players gather in groups of between two and four players and simply "Play Pass". Passers and receivers both are involved in this drill and receivers here are defined as both ends and backs. The group simply throws the ball back and forth at one another concentrating their efforts on proper hand position with

regard to catching the ball and in the case of the passer, proper holding of the ball in executing the throw. Fig. 2.2 shows the drill setup for Station 1 in its most basic form. The passers do nothing but concentrate on throwing the ball and their execution with regard to holding it and its delivery. It is pointed out to the passer at this point that this is the only concern he must have with regard to the drill -- where the ball goes is of only secondary importance now.

The execution of the passers technique at this point involves the following steps:

1. His main concern is the placement of the hand on the ball. This should include his firmly grasping the lace with the last two fingers of one hand and his thumb and index finger closer to one end of the ball.



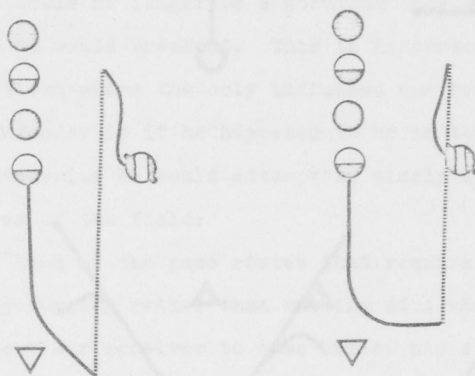
2. The ball is brought to the chest, just under the chin and held with both hands, one on either side of the throwing end of the ball.
3. The ball is raised by the throwing hand with fingers on the lace as described in 1, to about the level of the passer's ear on the throwing side of his body. The opposite hand at this point is held out from the body in the direction of the throw.
4. The foot on the throwing side of the body is back with the heel off the ground, the opposite foot is pointed in the direction of the throw parallel with the non-throwing arm. More weight is resting on the throwing foot than the lead foot.
5. The delivery is made by extending the throwing arm at the elbow and as the ball is released the fingers pull down on the lace to allow it to spiral.
6. No deliberate attempt should be made to spin the ball -- simply a pull on the lace is a natural follow through to the throw.

These six steps then are practised by each passer in our little drill outlined in Fig. 2.2, concentrating their energy to the fine points of each technique. The receivers align themselves as described in Fig. 2.2 -- their express purpose now, like the passers, is to practise the most finite points of their technique which is receiving the ball. They simply throw the ball back and forth, paying particular attention to the following points:

1. The hands in all types of catches must be relaxed from the wrist to the end of the fingers. The best evaluation of this point is to have the receiver listen for the smack of the ball on his hands. The less noise the better the catch and the more relaxed he is, until he can actually catch the ball without making any smack against it at all.
2. The fingers of the hands (both hands) are spread a comfortable distance apart, but wide enough to present as great a target as possible. The fingers and the hands are slightly cupped in a natural position.
3. From the drill pattern of Fig. 2.2, if the ball is received above the chest, the thumbs are closer together, describing a form of the football as it comes to the receiver. If the ball is received below the chest the little fingers are in the same position as the thumbs were above the chest, that is, in closer proximity with the thumbs pointed to the outside.
4. The receiver concentrates on the ball immediately that it takes flight and looks the ball right into his hands regardless of the position in which it is thrown. Each receiver as he propells the ball deliberately attempts to throw it to a position that is above the chest or below the chest. In fact the receivers are instructed to put the ball well into the air so that the receiver will have to leave the ground in order to catch the ball.

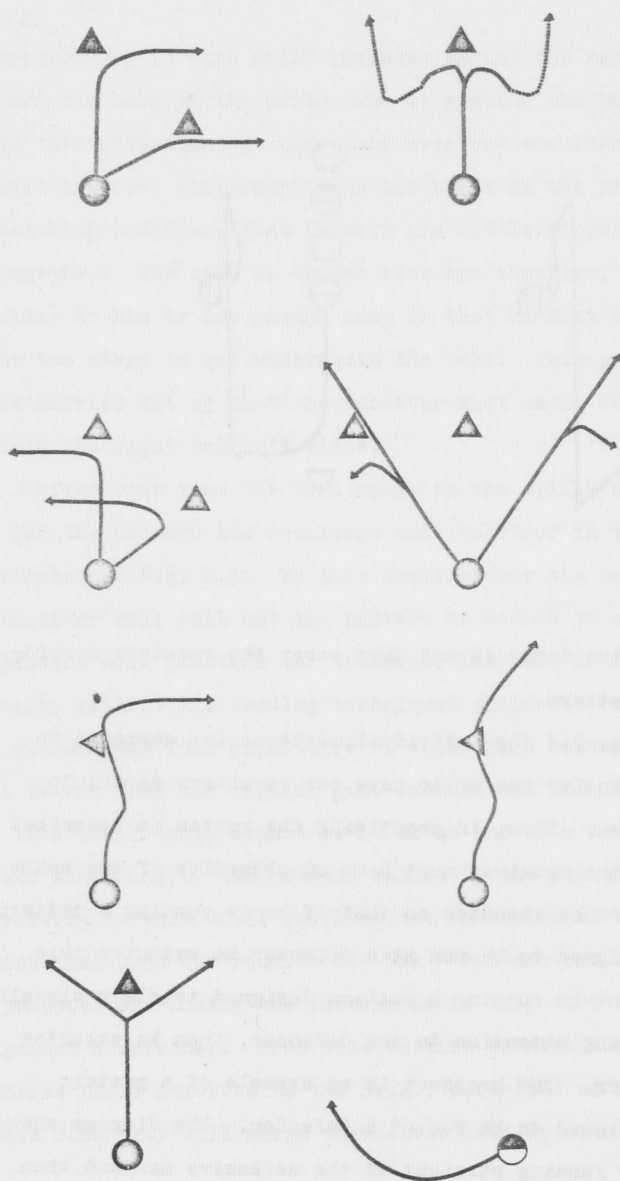
5. Progression in this drill includes having the receiver turn his back on the person who is passing the ball. In this situation he looks back over one shoulder, stands with his feet stationary with his hands in the proper catching position, that is with his little fingers together. The ball is thrown over his shoulder, either close to him or far enough away so that he must step one or two steps to get underneath the ball. This procedure is carried out so that the receiver must catch from both the right and left sides.

After some time has been spent on the drills mentioned thus far the passers and receivers come together in the drill illustrated as Fig. 2.3. In this drill either the passer or the receiver will call out the pattern he wishes to execute. The passers will practise the technique involved in both dropback, rollout and bootleg techniques while the receivers will execute the full repertoire of their pass routes. This drill is run from our regular game cadence and the receivers will take their usual stance be it as an end or a back and execute according to the cadence called by the passer. The progression in this drill involves the inclusion of two dummies head upon our receivers. The receivers use the dummies for purposes of running the pattern as if they were running it against a defender. From time to time we will have our defensive backs involved in the drill, described as Fig. 2.3. In this case they will align themselves head up with the



receiver as the dummy is and then cover the receiver according to his pattern.

In Fig. 2.4 the individual patterns are designed to run at a defensive man or to have our receivers sprint to a cleared area. Thus, in practising the routes as described in Fig. 2.3 the receiver must have an objective of the route in mind before he executes so that if he is running a pattern which is designed to be run at a defender he executes this way, and if he is running a pattern designed to clear himself without calling attention to the defender, then he executes in this manner. The breakout is an example of a pattern which is designed to be run at a defender. The diagram shows our receiver running straight at the defensive man and then



breaking for the sideline. However, should that defender be to the left or the right of the receiver his initial move out would no longer be a straight line but an angle and then he would breakout. This is in contrast to the slant pattern where the only influence our receiver would give a defender is if he happened to be in the line of his route, otherwise he would attempt to simply sprint to a clear area of the field.

Each of the pass routes that require a cut is performed by turning rather than cutting at a sharp angle. This allows our receiver to come out of his stance at full speed and maintain full speed throughout the distance of his pattern rather than slowing down to make a cut. The receiver is instructed regarding this technique of his route and each route is executed in this manner. He is constantly reminded that all of our patterns are run at full speed from the stance until after he completes the pass.

When some level of proficiency with regard to executing the particular pass route is attained the defender, as outlined in Fig. 2.3, is given an air dummy with which he will contact the receiver immediately after he catches the ball. This will help simulate game conditions and helps the receiver practise adjusting to the balance needed in accepting a blow while he is concentrating on tucking in the ball and turning upfield.

To practise our centre quarterback exchange we assign the centre to the pass receiver drill, as set up in Fig. 2.3, and he simply passes the ball to the quarterback with the onset of the execution of the drill. In this way we can ensure practise of the T-exchange and also by switching centres and passers, each passer will come to know the characteristics of the centre snapping the ball and likewise each centre will come to know the characteristics of the passer who is taking the ball from him.

Station #2 Centre and Punters

The centre employs a brief warmup drill which is essentially several flexibility exercises of the legs, particularly the inside, the thigh and knee areas of the legs. The execution of the punt-snap begins in this stance which is identical to the T-snap. The only adjustment that we recommend to our centres is that their foot placement may be a little wider in the punt-snap than in the T-snap. The ball is held in the same manner that the passer holds a ball in executing a throw. That is, the ball is turned so that the lace of the ball is turned to the side of the dominant hand with the fingers of the dominant hand across the lace as a passer grips the ball. The arms are straight with the execution of the snap but not rigid. The ball is delivered with a two-arm motion between the legs and released by the dominant hand with a pull up on the lace to create the spiral. At the release of the ball the arms are turned

inward and the wrists and elbows are fully extended. In the follow-through the wrists are flexed and turned outward and the palms follow the flight of the ball. Before the delivery the centre lowers his head to find the target, which is the thigh of the kicking foot of the punter. After the execution of this snap the head and arms are forcefully brought up to blocking position. This phase of the centre's technique must be emphasized.

In the first stage of practise the centre executes the particular technique for the punt-snap at a distance of about five yards, concentrating entirely on execution and accuracy of the technique as outlined. In the early stages of practise the technique is practised with two centres; one receiving the ball and the other executing. This simple procedure enables the centres to do more snapping and shows the centre what receiving the ball is like. From the five yard snapping distance the drill progresses with an increase in the snapping distance to the regular twelve yard centre-punter relationship. Throughout the practise of the technique, in this simple drill and progression, the centre is reminded and must concentrate on speed and accuracy in the delivery of the ball and recovery to execute his blocking responsibility. The punter warms up in the same fashion as the centre employing flexibility exercises. Before any punting is done the punter simply goes through the motions, dry run, without a ball, executing the various parts of the technique as he

will in practise with the emphasis toward further warming up. The execution of the punt is as follows:

1. The stance of the punter is similar to the quarter-eagle stance with the kicking foot forward, weight distributed evenly on both feet, knees and hips slightly flexed forward, shoulders and arms relaxed with palms open to the ball in front of the kicking foot.
2. The punter moves forward to meet the ball, bringing his back foot in front of the kicking foot.
3. After receiving the ball he positions it so that the laces are free of the bottom of the ball where the foot will make contact and adjusts it parallel to the ground, with the front of the ball turned slightly to the inside. The ball is held with one hand forward and the other near the back and side of the ball. The arms should be comfortably flexed forward and then fully extended when the ball is released. Head and shoulders square to the line.
4. The kicking foot is slung forward in a pendulum-like motion and at the time of contact the leg is locked at the knee with the foot extended and toes pointed forward.
5. Contact on the ball is made with the instep of the foot and the foot is brought up as close to the hand as possible before the contact is made. No deliberate attempt should be made to spiral the ball by turning the foot toward the inside of the body.

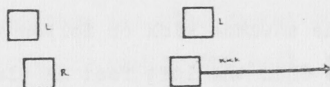
6. The kicking foot follows through in a natural swing. The supporting leg stays on the ground as long as possible. Arms of the punter should go forward and outward to maintain forward balance. To practise the technique the punter begins a session by punting a ball for technique and height only, concentrating on these two particular aspects and gradually progressing to a maximum in force and distance before the end of the drill.

Station #3 Place Kicking

To carry out the place kicking drill we use four players. These players are two place kickers, one practising the technique of place kicking, the other retrieving the ball that has been kicked, and the holder. The holder is our quarterback who alternates between the place kicking station and the passing-receiving station. The centre like the quarterback alternates between the place kicking station and the pass-receive station and the punt station. Sometime during the fifteen minute period of specialist drill the coach, when he feels that the execution is satisfactory, will alternate place kicker and retriever and switch quarterback and centres with the other groups previously mentioned.

We start the drill by placing the ball on the ten-yard line between the uprights. The holder positions himself approximately seven or eight yards from the centre. He assumes a resting position on his left knee with the right leg extended towards the centre. The upper body is

turned toward the centre with the hands extending forward, thumbs touching to afford the centre a target and to reach the ball as soon as possible without disrupting his balance. The movement, as the holder receives the ball and places it on the ground should be continuous. That is, as the ball is received the holder draws his hands back and down in one motion. The ball is placed point down on a fixed or predetermined spot on the field approximately in line with the inner thigh of the left leg of the holder. The ball is held upright with the right hand once it has been placed on the spot. The holder may have time to rotate the ball in order that the laces are not directly facing the kicker. The holder remains in this position with eye and hand on the ball until the ball has definitely been kicked. The kicker employs a step and a half method to kick the ball. This method is used both for field goals and points after touchdown, however, as the distance increases the stance may be adapted to accommodate the distance. That is, the kicking foot may be dropped back to a position such that it becomes a two step method rather than a one and a half step method, as in Fig. 2.5. The kicker stands with kicking foot forward at a distance determined by his individual ability and physique and the distance that the ball is to be kicked. His kicking foot is positioned directly in line with the placement of the ball and supposed flight. Like the punter the place kicker assumes a quarter eagle stance with his head down and eyes fixed on the spot for the ball.



As the holder receives the ball the kicker steps about twelve to fourteen inches with his right leg in line with the fixed spot for the ball and the mid-point of the upright. A forceful long step is executed with the left leg. This step should position the left foot about three inches behind and to the left of the ball.

The kicker swings through the ball with the kicking foot. At the moment of contact the knee is extended and locked while the ankle is flexed and locked. The head is down and the hips are flexed forward. The arms should be positioned naturally in front of the body to maintain balance after the kick. The foot makes contact just below the belly of the ball and down the centre line of the ball.

On the follow through kick straight through to the desired position through the uprights. The follow through ends when the kicking foot makes contact with the ground again, until that time the head is held down.

Care should be taken to prevent any undue lateral body shifting during the advance kick or follow through. This especially applies when the left foot is placed on the ground before the kick and when the kicking foot is driving toward the ball. All forces must be directed toward the desired line of flight.

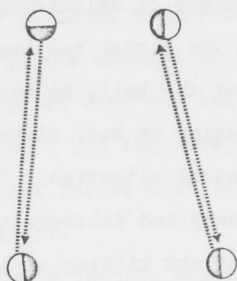
There are three factors which aid in giving the ball distance. These are:

1. Speed of forward body motion.
2. Pendulum like swing as the thigh rotates around the hip joint.
3. Pendulum like action as the knee extends from the flexed or cocked position before the kick.

During the execution of the drill the holder and kicker are instructed to take up safety positions periodically. The kicker is instructed to go to the left and cover the left flank and the holder goes to the right to cover the right flank. This applies when a field goal is being attempted and the possibility of a return from the attempted field goal.

Our players are instructed to employ stretching exercises before the drill begins to loosen up in preparation for

starting the drill. The centres use the same routine as the punt centres use. The place kickers concentrate on stretching exercises particularly for the hamstring and quadricep muscle groups. After this preliminary warmup the centre and holder practise their technique of delivering the ball, catching and spotting it. The kicker now begins the dry-run drill without the aid of the ball, he imitates the step and a half method concentrating on body alignment and kicking through as he will in an actual situation. The kicker begins executing the technique slowly and deliberately, concentrating on proper body alignment and kicking technique. The kicker is instructed to restrict his range of movement, thereby concentrating on body alignment and kicking techniques only. As the dry run progresses the range of movement is increased to a full range of motion. At this point the four members of the station as previously mentioned come together to execute the point after touchdown. When execution of the point after touchdown is satisfactory the ball is moved laterally right or left approximately seven yards. The drill progresses in depth and width according to the individual's ability and coach's discretion (Fig. 1.4).



Station #4 Punt Receivers

Our punt receivers work in pairs throughout the specialist drill. One man is designated as the fly man and the other receiver as the bounce man. The fly man always attempts to catch the ball before it hits the ground regardless of its line of flight or height. The bounce man is a follow up and a safety. His position involves backing up the fly man should the ball hit the ground short of the fly man. In this case the bounce man is then responsible to return the ball. On each punt return then only one of the punt

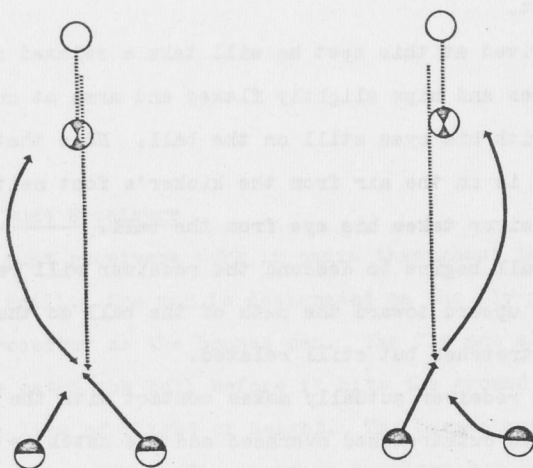
receivers will attempt to catch the ball and he is designated by the flight of the ball. Whereas the other punt receiver is a back up man.

In practising the technique we begin by having our punt receivers spread out about twenty yards apart facing one another as described in Fig. 2.6. One receiver simply throws a ball high in the air and the second receiver attempts a catch. The receiver imitates the technique exactly as if he were catching a punted ball. This technique is as follows:

1. The punt receiver must spring to the area where he judges the ball will hit the ground positioning himself on that spot so that he will be almost stationary when the ball is caught.
2. Once arrived at this spot he will take a relaxed stance with knees and hips slightly flexed and arms at chest height with his eyes still on the ball. Note that once the ball is in the air from the kicker's foot neither punt receiver takes his eye from the ball.
3. As the ball begins to descend the receiver will reach his arms upward toward the path of the ball so that they are outstretched but still relaxed.
4. The punt receiver actually makes contact with the ball with arms outstretched overhead and the catch is begun in this position.
5. He then drags the ball to a proper carrying position and while he is guiding the ball to this position he

- gradually slows down its flight to a stationary position.
6. After the ball is caught he tucks it in as a ball carrier taking the ball from a quarterback and begins the return with short, hard and quick running steps back upfield.
 7. When he has gathered sufficient speed he may then switch the ball to a one-armed carry and lengthen his running stride.

This technique then is practised simply by the punt receivers in groups of two while the punter and centres are also warming up.



When the punters, centres and receivers have all warmed up with their preliminary drills we move to the drill outlined in Fig. 2.7. The punt receivers now align themselves in pairs and practise from day to day with the same partner. They position themselves about forty yards downfield of the centre with each punt receiver about seven to ten yards on either side of the centre. The centre and punter execute their technique and the punt receivers receive and return the ball to the centre. This procedure involves the technique employed earlier in the little warmup drill with a bounce and fly man being designated on each punt and both receivers sprinting back to the centre and putting the ball down at the centres feet. They return to the receiving sight, that is, forty yards downfield to the centre by jogging back and then await their next turn.

CHAPTER 3

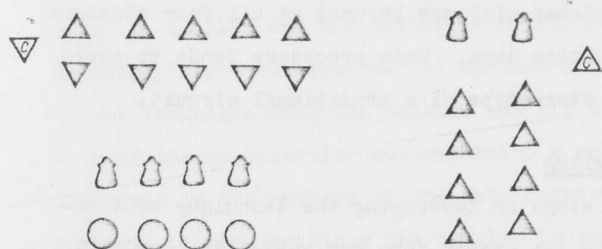
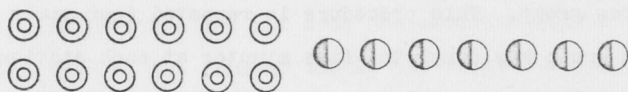
FUNDAMENTAL DRILLS AND TECHNIQUES

A twenty-minute period of the practise is devoted to what we call fundamental drills. These drills are made up of those fundamentals which are basic to good football, and are common to each position on our team. We have defined these fundamentals and stationed them for drills as follows: Station #1 - tackling; Station #2 - Butt Blocking; Station #3 - Agilities and Station #4 - Specific Specialist. Like the specialist drills, the drills in this phase of the practise are very simple, the emphasis once again is on technique and the repetition of the technique involved in the fundamental. Our objective is to develop the technique as a reaction rather than a deliberate movement, thus we are not concerned with various drills but a concentration of attention by players and coaches to the very fine points of fundamental execution.

Our squad is divided into four groups for this period. These are: 1 - the offensive backfield; 2 - the offensive line; 3 - the contain unit; and 4 - the force unit. Each group begins at different stations. For example, the offensive line would begin with the offensive line coach. The contain unit with the contain unit coach; the force unit with the force unit coach and the offensive backfield

with the offensive backfield coach. For this first five-minute period each coach would deal with some specific specialty peculiar to his unit, such as stance, blocking, tackling, agilities or any fundamental which he deems necessary for extra work. At the end of the five-minute period, as shown in Fig. 3.1 the entire squad would stop practise and align themselves facing the next station, in a stance peculiar to their position. Each coach raises an arm and when all four groups are in ready stance the head coach will blow two sharp blasts on a whistle. The first sound brings the entire squad to a down stance and the second blast serves as a "go" signal. On the "go" signal

(c)



each group sprints to the next station. With the groups progressing to the next station the coaches at their respective stations will proceed according to the fundamental practise listed in Fig. 3.1, that is our offensive backfield coach will now direct the offensive line through the agility drills; our contain unit coach will direct our offensive backfield through tackling drills; our force unit coach will conduct 2-man and 7-man sled drills, both blocking and tackling and agility; and our offensive line coach will direct the butt block practise. At the end of the next five-minute period all the groups will align as previously described and sprint once again on the second blast of the whistle to the next station. The coach at that particular station will now repeat his fundamental technique procedure with the new group. This procedure is repeated four times until each group has completed five minutes at each station.

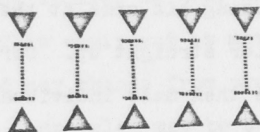
We employ a 2-man sled, a 7-man sled, air dummies and heavy blocking dummies as well as tires for these fundamental drills. This equipment is moved about through the four stations and may change from practise to practise. For example, the 2-man sled may be used at all four stations on successive practise days. This procedure tends to avoid the monotony and stereotype of a traditional circuit.

Station #1 - Tackling

The first stage in developing the technique of tackling is devoted to the proper form and subjecting our ball

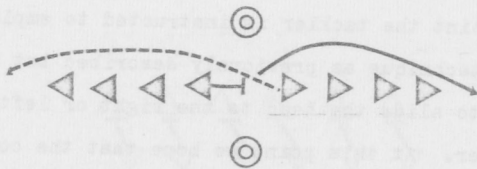
players to repetition which will improve their form as well as familiarize them with the contact and closeness involved in tackling. The progression in learning the technique begins with a stationary line drill so that the coach may observe each movement and the player may learn each segment of the technique as an entity first of all and then as a total movement. The first drill involves simply a line drill as described in Fig. 3.1. The tacklers face a line of ball carriers and these groups are paired approximately according to size. The tackler approaches the ball carrier and places his face mask into the numbers of the ball carrier with his feet spread about shoulder width apart and knees and hips flexed (quarter eagle stance) and back straight. His vision is concentrated on the jersey of the ball carrier in this position and his arms are extended backward and outward. On the command tackle the tackler simply dips his knees slightly, clubs both arms behind the ball carrier just below the seat, crossing his arms at the wrist and then lifts the ball carrier straight up. Corrections of this simple technique are then made individually by the coach to tackler and the technique is repeated several times in fairly rapid succession. At no time during this phase of the technique does the tackler put his head to either side of the ball carrier but maintains a position with his face mask in the numbers of the ball carrier. For further emphasis of the technique the tackler is instructed to club

hard with the arms slapping the ball carrier just below the seat and throwing him into the air as far as possible. The next step in the progression involves a simple addition to the first drill, this requires that the tacklers now stand about three yards away from the ball carrier as shown in Fig. 3.2. The same technique is now practised with the tackler walking toward the ball carrier and assuming the stance described as a part of Fig. 3.1, and then executing the tackling technique. This next step is repeated several times at walking speed, then the tacklers are instructed to increase the speed of the walk to a slow run, still executing the tackle in the same manner. At all points during this progression the tackler is constantly cautioned about



putting his face mask into the numbers of the ball carrier, not to deviate his head movements to either side.

For the next step in the progression the tacklers and ball carriers are aligned in single files with two men facing one another as shown in Fig. 3.3. Two markers are set down about four yards apart, the tackler is about two yards from the middle of the markers and the ball carrier is about three yards from the middle of the markers. The execution of the drill involves two commands: the first the "go" command on which signal the tackler in his defensive quarter-eagle stance will turn the motors on, on "tackle" the ball carrier will run at slow speed to the point between the two markers and the tackler will advance at slow



speed to execute the tackle as described previously. Once again the tackler will throw the ball carrier into the air upon making contact, and proceed to the end of the ball carrier's line with the ball carrier going to the end of the tackler line. After proficiency is at an acceptable level the drill is modified to one command, that being "go". On the go signal now the tackler will turn the motors on, the ball carrier will begin to run and the tackler will step forward under his own judgment and make the tackle when he deems it to his advantage. At this point we work for rapidity in the drill to hurry both the ball carrier and the tackler to see whether the technique has yet to be polished up or whether it is beginning to become a reaction rather than a deliberate thought out movement.

Our final step in the head-on tackling progression is to employ the drill described in Fig. 3.3 with both ball carrier and tackler running at near full speed or at full speed. At this point the tackler is instructed to employ exactly the same technique as previously described but at moment of impact to slide the head to the right or left side of the ball carrier. At this point we hope that the concentrated effort of his looking at the jersey of the ball carrier will carry over so that his head remains in good position, that is, with his head up looking downfield, past the ball carrier after contact is made. We want to avoid at all cost his dropping his head, as this is bad technique as well as a

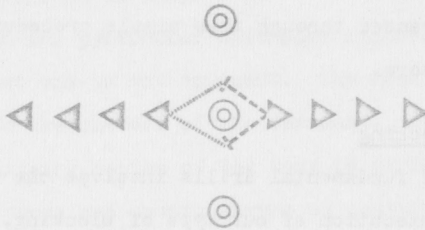
situation that invites injury.

The side tackling progression technique is almost identical to the head on procedure. Fig. 3.4 shows the drill alignment for the practise of the side tackle technique. The only change being offsetting either the ball carrier or tacklers. The tackler moves close enough to the ball carrier to have his head and face mask across the numbers of the ball carrier's jersey. His knees are flexed, back straight and arms outward and backward from his body, which is the same stance as he employed in the drill described as Fig. 3.1. On the command "tackle" he executes the tackle in exactly the same fashion as for the technique of Fig. 3.1. The difference now being of course that the ball carrier has his side toward the midline of the tackler's body. The tackler is instructed now



that with the clubbing action and the lifting of the ball carrier he must turn him so that the midline of the ball carrier's body is brought parallel with the midline of the tackler's body and they actually end up in the same position as they would in the head-on tackle. At this point the tackler once again throws the ball carrier into the air and the drill is repeated. The same procedure is repeated with the alignment described in Fig. 3.4 offset to the other side so the tackling with the opposite shoulder may be practised.

The drill changes to the alignment described in Fig. 3.5, three markers are placed about four yards apart, the tacklers about two yards behind the middle marker, the ball carriers about three yards behind the middle marker facing the tacklers. The progression within this drill is similar to the progression in the drill described as Fig. 3.3. That is, the coach will issue two commands, go and tackle. On the "go" command the tackler will turn the motors on, quarter-eagle stance and on "tackle" the ball carrier will deliberately run to his right or left and the tackler will adjust to execute the side tackle. As a matter of repetitive and efficient handling of this drill for the first progression through the ball carriers alternate going right or left and we can thus move the drill on more quickly. Later on, however, we give the ball carrier the choice of his own direction and the tackler must adjust. After a reasonable level of proficiency is developed in this technique we switch to the one command



drill of simply "go" and the ball carrier now has the alternative of running right or left and the tackler adjusts and executes the tackle when he deems it necessary.

The important coaching point in this drill is to impress upon the tackler the importance of making this a side tackle and not attempting to go laterally and then turn toward the ball carrier, but to gauge his speed and angle so that he will meet the ball carrier as he steps between the markers. The technique is exactly the same as it was in Fig. 3.4. We now allow the tackler to pick the ball carrier up and run a few steps with him rather than throwing him.

The 2-man Crowther machine is often used as an aid to practising tackling, because of its excellent recoil action and ability to swing right or left the person tackling the machine must have good balance, coordination and stability. However we do not attempt to use the 2-man sled for tackling until we have progressed through this simple procedure that has been outlined here.

Station #2 Butt Blocking

This area of fundamental drills involves the basic and comprehensive execution of our type of blocking. In other words, we attempt to outline and practise our method of blocking, butt block, in terms of the progression and different situations that our players are exposed to during a game. At the blocking station all groups will execute the fundamental progressions of the butt block. As time and proficiency of execution advances, the coach would practise each unit in accordance to their specific offensive blocking duties and peculiarities. That is, offensive backfielders would have blocking duties and situations that differ from both of the interior linemen offensively and defensively. Consequently, their practise efforts would be geared to their game situations and keys.

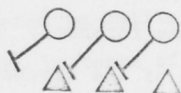
All units begin the basic progressions of the butt block in the same manner. They begin in a 6-point stance. That is, the hands, knees and feet are placed on the ground.

The feet are positioned about shoulder width apart with the toes curled under and in contact with the ground. From this position there are three points of execution we work on before allowing the player to progress to the 3-point stance that is described in Chapter 4.

From the particular offensive stance, the player explodes out and to the opponent. The nose and forehead is driven into the numbers of the opponent. Just before contact a slight dipping action of the body is performed to gain increased power and upward thrust as contact is made with the opponent. The forearms are whipped into the opponent's body under the point of contact of the forehead. These two actions, as well as the forward momentum of the blocker, should serve to nullify the opponent's charge as well as open him up for inside blocking position. We attempt to keep the forehead in contact with the opponent. If our blocking assignment requires that we drive the player away or down the line of scrimmage, we must then move the hit in the line of the desired path. The feet must be moving with short, choppy and driving steps at all times throughout the block. No long steps for driving power or body positioning must be taken. The head must be brought up and the player in the fundamental hitting position. That is, the back must not be parallel to the ground but instead the shoulders should be higher than the hips of the blocker. This position enables the blocker to drive the opponent back as well as up, permitting the blocker to attain

an inside body position on the opponent.

If the blocker is confronted with a cutoff block the same technique is employed as in a head-up block. In other words, the offensive player drives the nose into his opponent's numbers and whips the near forearm into the opponent's body. This means that the blocker will be striking and driving the opponent with his shoulder as in the straight-shoulder block.



It should be noted that this block is in effect the cutoff block. However, execution of the butt block in any situation will be the same as what is called the cutoff block, screen block, reverse block, etc.

This simplifies our teaching task in that we need only teach and practise the butt block in order to cover all the different types of situations and blocks required for these situations.

All units are required to practise the butt block in the same manner when they are beginning the season. As proficiency develops, the situations vary according to the situations each group could meet in a game. The technique of the butt block is executed the same way for all units in all situations.

It should be noted that progression at this station is in terms of execution, situation, and equipment. That is, progression in terms of execution involves mastery of three points of emphasis:

1. Head position.
2. Arm techniques.
3. Legs.

In terms of situation, we deal with the execution of the butt block as follows:

1. 6-point stance.
2. 4-point stance.
3. 3-point stance.
4. 2-point stance (backfielders).

5. Head-up position; to the immediate right or left; from the flank position; and from their position in the I formation.

Progression in terms of equipment is also from the basic to the complex:

1. No equipment.
2. Dummies.
3. Chute and dummies.
4. Chute, boards, and dummies.
5. The 2- and 7-man sleds.
6. Line opponents.
7. Any combination of the above, for example, chutes, boards and players.

Station #3 Agilities

The drills at this station are basically agility and reaction drills. No attempt is made to teach any football techniques as such. It may be noted here that proper stance, running form etc. are stressed. Players must be aware of the purpose behind the drills and their application to the game situation. The drills are of short duration and require only a few reactions per repetition. Coordination, speed and reaction to a given signal are stressed in these drills, thereby forcing the players to react quickly and thus increase their mobility.

The drills can be made quite enjoyable to the player since a competitive aspect can be introduced and used to great advantage.

There are a great number of agility and reaction drills which require no equipment and as such are applicable to any situation. E.g., carioca and down-the-line drill.

It is important to vary the drills so that the players are constantly required to learn new movements and react to different signals.

Progression can be made from no equipment to drills which require more reactions and different apparatus. An example of a more complex agility drill would be a drill using tires. E.G., straight run through, hop through and cross stepping.

Agility drills involving blocking dummies, 2 and 7-man sleds, or no equipment are numerous and can be modified to the situation or to involve the specific movements you wish to incorporate. The number of agility and reaction drills that can be used are limited only by a coach's imagination. Most books written on football include several drills for agility and reaction; these drills can be adapted or modified to suit a specific situation. As previously mentioned, players should enjoy these drills but the basic purpose behind them must be remembered; development of coordination, speed, reaction and mobility.

Specialties

Each unit has particular specialties or techniques which are specific to the unit. In other words, some offensive linemen, are required to pull out of the line and perform trap blocking; some defensive personnel must be adroit at the hand shiver technique, short block situations, post and power blocks, etc.

Personnel in each unit have techniques to perfect that are not used or emphasized in the other units. These are specific specialties and what we call the SS drill. At the beginning of the fundamental drills certain units will start the circuit with their particular coach. E.G. the force unit will work with the force unit coach. During this first five minutes these players will concentrate on the skills and techniques which differentiate them from the other groups. At the end of this five minutes of specialties the units will progress to the different coaches to further practise drills, skills and techniques which are common to all units.

CHAPTER 4

OFFENSIVE LINE

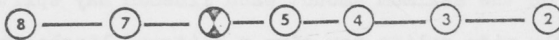
This chapter deals with the techniques and drills for offensive linemen. Different types of blocks employed in each aspect of the game and the progressions used to teach these fundamentals will be considered here.

For reasons which will be explained later in this chapter 6 our offensive line personnel is numbered as follows:

Center	=	6 man
Guard	=	5 man
Guard	=	4 man
strong side tackle	=	3 man
short side tackle	=	7 man
split end	=	2 man
tight end	=	8 man

Line Splits

Splits are the distance from the inside foot of one man to the outside foot of the man to his inside.



What could be considered normal offensive line splits would be:

2 and 8 men = 1 to 3 feet

3 and 7 men = 1 to 2 feet

4 and 5 men = 1 to 2 feet

Although off linemen have a prescribed split from the man to their inside a great deal of advantage can be gained by varying this split. A defensive lineman is told to line up according to the position of an offensive lineman. If for example he is told to line up on the outside shoulder of an offensive lineman then that is where he should position himself unless his position is changed by the linebacker. An offensive lineman finding that the man opposite him is consistently lining up in one place can use this to his advantage by splitting slightly out to spread the defense or slightly in to tighten up the offensive line on a D.B.P. Offensive linemen have an advantage from the start, they know where the point of attack is and when the play is going to start. By splitting appropriately they can gain a position on the defensive lineman which gives them a further advantage. Care must be taken however and players must know exactly what they are trying to do in varying their splits. Limits must be placed on the maximum amount each lineman may split. Consistently wide splits may give a blitzing linebacker an open road to the ball so the splits must be varied.

Used properly, varying offensive line splits can give a decided advantage to the offensive line and more use should be made of this technique than is presently being done.

Offensive Line Personnel

All along the offensive line certain abilities that are required in some positions are not required in others or possibly to lesser degree. Using an unbalanced line and the type of offense employed here this difference of physical characteristics and abilities is even more noticeable. In this section the characteristics that one would look for in choosing an offensive lineman for a certain position will be outlined as well as the type of stance they use. The type of stance that a lineman uses is decided by two factors:

1. The job he is required to do.
2. His physique.

All offensive linemen use a 3 point stance except for the 6 man whose stance will be discussed in detail later. The 3 point stance is universally accepted as the offensive lineman's stance since it allows him to put enough weight forward to get a good lunge but also allows the amount of mobility to each side which is necessary if he is called upon to pull out and block.

The 2 and 8 Men Technique

2 Man

Since the 2 man is primarily a pass receiver and secondarily a blocking lineman the characteristics one would look for to fill this position are:

- pass catching ability -- must have good hands and be very aggressive since he often has a tough defensive end to go through to get out to run his pattern.
- height -- should be quite tall since this gives him natural advantage over defensive backs and provides a good target for our passer.
- speed -- must have good speed and be mobile enough to manouevre in a defensive backfield after catching the ball.
- blocking -- should be a good blocker but limited deficiencies in this department might be overlooked in view of extremely good pass catching ability.

The two man's stance could be likened to that of a sprinter; the balance of weight is forward and he should be ready to get off fast. The split between his feet should be no more than shoulder width apart. Foot stagger could vary from toe-to-instep to toe 3 to 4 inches behind the heel, depending upon leg length. The normal foot stagger would probably be toe-to-heel. The feet should be parallel and pointed straight ahead with most of the weight on the balls

of the feet.

The knees should be directly above the feet so that they are the same distance apart as the feet.

The legs should be partially flexed and the back straight.

The shoulders should be level and the head up.

Since this is a 3 point stance one hand must be put on the ground to take part of the body weight (the hand that is put down is usually the dominant hand). The other arm rests easily on knee on the same side with the elbow bent approximately 90 degrees and the hand clenched.

The hand that is put down is placed from 20 inches to 26 inches in front of the front foot.

In using this type of stance the 2 man gives up stability and the opportunity of moving to either side equally as well as moving ahead but gains in efficiency and speed in moving out straight ahead.

8 Man

The 8 man is more of a blocking lineman than is the 2 man and hence the characteristics one would look for are different. The 8 man should be big and strong. He must be a good blocker and should have good catching ability as well. Since he must also manoeuvre in the defensive backfield in running his pass routes he must have good speed and mobility.

Since the 8 man must be equally ready to block or run a pass route and also since he could be a heavier individual

than the 2 man his stance will differ. His stance should have a slightly wider base and a lower centre of gravity with less weight forward than the 2 man.

The placement will be about shoulder width and the stagger between a toe-to-instep and a toe-to-heel relationship. The feet should be parallel and pointing straight ahead with most of the weight balanced on the balls of the feet. The knees should be directly above the feet and the legs flexed. The back should be straight, shoulders level and head up.

The hand that is placed on the ground should be about 16 inches to 22 inches in front of the front foot.

This stance should give the 8 man the stability and mobility that he needs in blocking and yet let him drive straight ahead with speed he needs to get out and run his pass route.

3 and 7 Men Technique

3 Man

The 3 man as the strong side tackle must be a very strong blocker and what he may lack in mobility must make up for in strength and power. The characteristics necessary in a good 3 man are:

- size -- must be big and strong.
- speed -- must be fast off the ball and mobile enough to drive out and clear his man or step back to form a pass protection pocket.

- blocking ability -- must be an aggressive blocker.

Since the 3 man is usually big and his duties are either blocking straight ahead, or blocking down his stance must consider both of these aspects. The feet should be shoulder width or slightly wider apart. The stagger would be between toe-to-instep and toe-to-heel. Feet should be parallel and straight ahead, the weight balanced on the balls of the feet and the knees directly above the feet. The shoulders should be level, the back straight and the head up. The knees should be slightly flexed. The down hand should be about 16 inches to 22 inches ahead of the front foot.

Since the 3 man is always a blocker he must be able to drive out of his stance and be off the ball extremely fast.

7 Man

The 7 man is the short side tackle and in this position must be a very strong straight-ahead blocker but must also be mobile enough to pull and trap around the end or the strong side. The 7 man does not require the size that a good 3 man would have but he should make up for it in speed and mobility. The 7 man must be a very aggressive blocker and should be able to clear his man on a straight-ahead block, blocking down, on pass protection blocking or pulling and trapping out. Since the 7 man is usually a little smaller than the 3 man his stance is changed accordingly. The main difference would be in foot placement and distribution of

body weight. The feet should be shoulder width apart and the stagger would be about toe-to-instep. The down hand would be closer to the front foot than the 3 man making it a shorter stance enabling the 7 man to pull more easily -- this would also take more weight off the down hand and redistribute onto the feet. Other aspects of the stance would be very similar to that of a 3 man. The 7 man's stance should be comparable to the 4 and 5 men who are basically pulling guards.

6 Man

The 6 man as already noted is the centre. In this position a player is required to initiate the offensive play by means of either a T exchange or a long snap. The physical attributes that are required at this position are:

- should be fairly big and should be reasonably tall.
- must be a strong blocker
- should have strong arms and wrists
- must have good coordination and reaction since he must make the exchange with the quarterback and still execute a block.

The stance that the 6 man will take will be different than the other offensive lineman since he must grip the ball with both hands.

The 6 man's stance may be staggered or square. The square stance is preferable since the other linemen are lining up on the 6 man. The square stance allows the 6 man to square up to the line of scrimmage and this helps the T

and long snap.

In the stance itself the feet are placed side by side and slightly more than shoulder width apart. The knees must be spread fairly wide since the ball must be brought back up between them. The legs should be flexed and the back straight, shoulders level and head up. The arms should be completely extended when grasping the ball.

There should be very little weight placed on the ball itself so that most of the weight is on the feet.

The 4 and 5 Men Technique

The 4 and 5 men are in effect the pulling guards. They are lined up side by side in the unbalanced formations. The 4 and 5 men are required to block straight ahead, block down, pass block, pull and trap. The last of these requirements is the most important in selecting the 4 and 5 men. They must be extremely fast and mobile to do the job and must be very good downfield blockers. They are usually smaller than the other offensive linemen and faster. Often a former fullback makes a good pulling guard since they have good speed and as a fullback should also be good downfield blockers. The importance of having good 4 and 5 men cannot be over-emphasized since in our offense they often make the initial block at the line and without it the play just won't go.

The stance of the 4 and 5 men is such that it facilitates pulling to the left or to the right but also gives them the necessary leverage to execute a straight-ahead block.

The feet should be about shoulder width apart, parallel and staggered toe-to-instep. It is important to make sure that the 4 and 5 men always line up with both feet pointing straight ahead because any pointing in the direction they are to pull will tell an observant linebacker which way the play is going. The down hand will be closer to the front foot than in any of the other offensive lineman's stances thus making the 4 and 5 men's stance "shorter". This gives them more of an advantage in moving to the side as well as straight ahead.

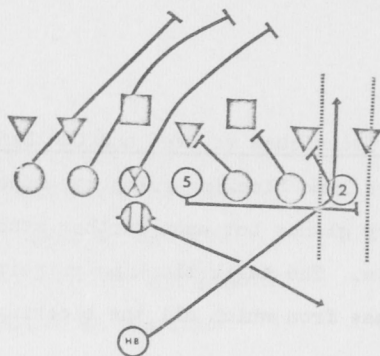
The other attributes of a good stance such as back straight, shoulders level and head up also apply to the 4 and 5 man's stance.

Basic Blocking Principle

The basic principle which all of our offensive blocking is based on is "We always attempt to block from the outside-in and from the inside-out at the point of attack to provide a running lane for our ball carrier."

This means that the offensive linemen have an "angle" on the man they are blocking thus giving them more advantage in driving the opposing lineman away from the point of attack.

An example of this principle would be our 112 trap where the 2 man is the point of attack.

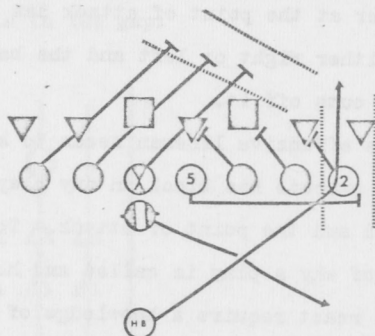


Individual rules for onside and offside linemen are:

onside - offensive players who are three positions from the point of attack butt block and drive their man away from the point of attack.

offside - offensive players who are at least three positions away from the point of attack go downfield to form a running lane that the ball carrier can cut back into.

Example - 112 trap



It may be noted that both onside and offside linemen establish running lanes for the ball carrier but the basic blocking principle is established only by the onside linemen.

Blocking Rules and Techniques vs Even and Odd Defenses

Our offensive line blocking rules may appear complicated from a cursory glance but upon further study they are actually very simple. The basic blocking principle previously discussed is the base from which all the blocking rules are drawn.

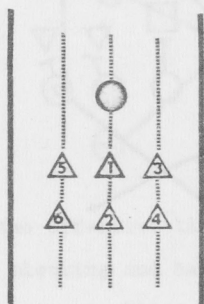
The type of blocking to be used on a particular play is called in the huddle by simply one word; trap, dive, sweep, etc. The point of attack is the last number in the three number series called by the quarterback. An example is 112 where the 2 man is the point of attack. Since the point of attack is a man and not the gap between two linemen the blocker at the point of attack has the option of blocking his man either right or left and the back simply follows the block and cuts off it.

The offensive lineman needs to know only these two things to execute his block on any play; the type of blocking to be used and the point of attack. To have a full understanding of why a play is called and how the defensive lineman could react require a knowledge of backfield routes. A top lineman will have this whole picture in mind when a play is called.

There are six possible positions in which any offensive lineman may find the defensive man in his area. These six positions are:

- head-up on the line 1
- head-up off the line 2
- outside on the line 3
- outside off the line 4
- inside on the line 5
- inside off the line 6

Regardless of which of these six positions the defensive man is in the offensive lineman must still consider him as being his man. To further define his area the offensive lineman considers a man to be in his area if there is a shoulder to shoulder relationship between himself and the defensive player (Fig. 4.4). If the defensive man is not in that offensive lineman's area then he is in the gap.

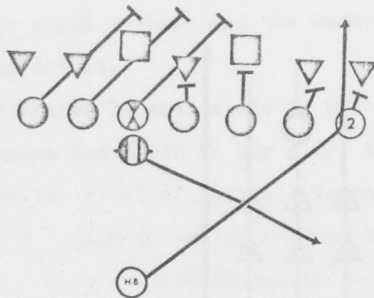


There are twelve types of blocking that can be used from either a balanced or unbalanced formation. In the succeeding part of this section the rules for these twelve types of blocking will be outlined as well as the techniques peculiar to that type of blocking.

Type I - Dive Blocking Technique

Rule for Dive Blocking - Point of attack man "butt" blocks his man either right or left along the line of scrimmage. Onside lineman butt block their men away from the point of attack. Offside linemen charge downfield to set up a downfield running lane.

Example - Dive Blocking (112 Dive)

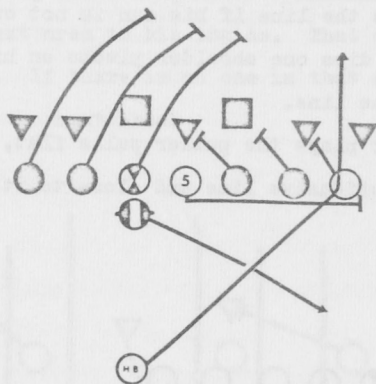


The man at the point of attack in the dive blocking has the option as to which way he wishes to block his man which makes it easier for him if the defense man is shading to one side.

Type II - Trap Blocking Technique

Rule for Trap Blocking - Point of attack man blocks down one area to the inside. The 5 man will pull (trap) to the strong side and the 4 man will pull (trap) to the short side. Onside linemen block down one man to the inside. Offside linemen sprint downfield to form a downfield running lane.

Example - Trap Blocking (112 trap)



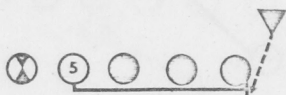
There are two offensive line techniques which are necessary to trap blocking and have not yet been covered. These two techniques are pulling and blocking down.

In pulling, the offensive lineman actually pulls out of the line and moves either one way or the other behind the offensive line to execute a block at another position. To be effective the puller must move out very quickly, get to the position his is to make the block and then execute the

block itself.

The first movement the puller makes is to turn the foot on the side he is pulling to in the direction he is pulling. He then pushes off from the hand he has down and the other foot. This movement swings his body perpendicular to the line of scrimmage and he is on his way. The steps that he takes should be short, choppy and powerful. The body should be kept low and the arms pumping. When the puller comes to the position he is to make his block he may have to turn in towards the line if his man is not out in the open. To turn he simply dips one shoulder pivots on his inside leg and drives into the line.

In all trap plays the puller pulls flat, that is he moves behind the offensive line and close to it.

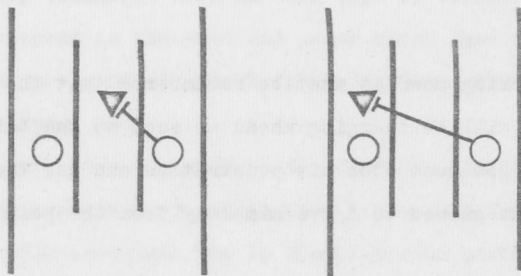


Actually he should be moving in the area where the rest of the offensive line were since they have charged ahead.

A puller never leaves an opponent in the open to go to his predetermined block. If there is someone closer then he must take that defensive man out of the play.

The technique of blocking down is used by the onside lineman and gives them an advantageous blocking angle on the defensive man.

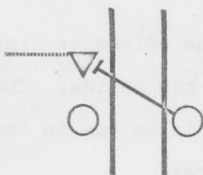
When blocking down the offensive lineman is blocking the man in the next area to his inside. That area will be a gap (Fig. 4-4). If there is no one in that area then he blocks down into the next area.



The man blocking down must realize though that the man in the next area to the inside may be in any one of the six

possible positions in that area.

The technique used in blocking down consists of: first stepping with the foot to the inside in the direction of the man he is to block, then driving out and butt blocking the man down the line.

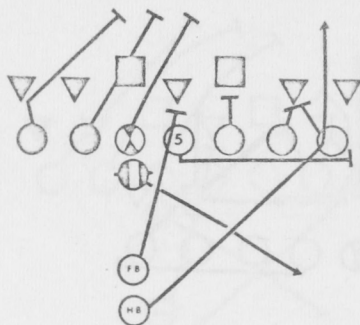


In blocking down it must be remembered that the defensive man will be charging ahead as soon as the ball is moved so that you must stop his penetration and use the momentum he has gained to drive him away from the point of attack.

Type III - Power Blocking Technique

Rule for Power Blocking - point of attack man double teams (post and power) with the man to his inside. Onside linemen block straight ahead 4 or 5 man pulls and traps out. Offside linemen charge downfield to form downfield running lane.

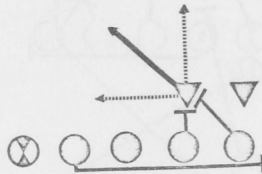
Example - Power Blocking (112 power)



The only technique used in this type of blocking that has not been covered is the post and power block that we used by the man at the point of attack (power man) and the man to his inside (post man).

The post man will be the first to hit the defensive man and his job is to straighten him up and drive him straight back. The power man who is blocking down provides the force to drive the man parallel to the line of scrimmage. Both use a "butt" block and the resultant force should seal off the defense line to the inside.

The trap on the defense and by the 5 man should seal off the defense line to the outside providing a primary running lane for the ball carrier. The power block can be



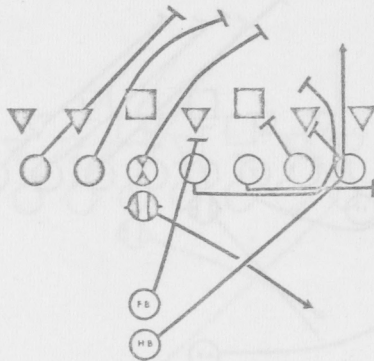
used very effectively against a defensive lineman who is constantly beating an offensive lineman since you are getting a two-on-one situation just inside the point of attack and a trap block out at the point of attack.

Type IV - Sweep Blocking Technique

Sweep Blocking Rule - Onside linemen block down one area.

Four and 5 men pull and knock down the first opponent standing along the line of scrimmage or sweep tight around the point of attack. Four man looks to the outside; 5 man looks to the inside. Offside linemen charge downfield to set up downfield running lane.

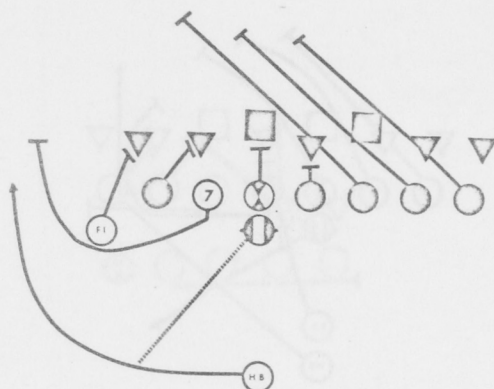
Example - Sweep Blocking (112 Sweep)



The offensive line techniques necessary to execute sweep blocking have been covered under previous types of blocking.

Type V - Pitch Blocking Technique

Rule for Pitch Blocking - Seven man pulls to short side and turns up at the point of attack, blocking the first defense man he sees. Eight man blocks down. Onside linemen block straight ahead and offside lineman charge downfield to set up downfield running lane.

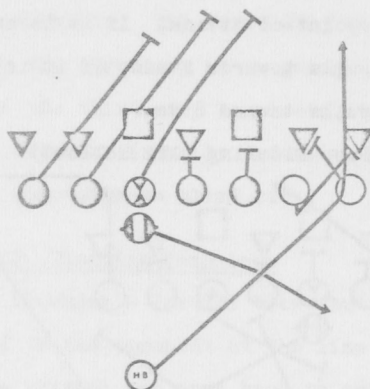
Example - Pitch Blocking (139 Pitch)

In pitch blocking the 7 man pulls with depth, that is, his pull route bellies back from the line about one to two yards and then he turns up at the point of attack in front of the ball carrier.

Type VI - Cross Blocking Technique

Cross Blocking Rule - Man at the point of attack blocks down one area to the inside. The man to the inside of the point of attack blocks out one area to the outside. Onside linemen block straight ahead. Offside linemen charge downfield to set up downfield running lane. Outside man on the cross goes first, inside man goes right off his buttocks.

Example - Cross Blocking (112 Cross)



In effect this is simply a short trap. In executing a trap block it is necessary that the outside man gets out very quickly so that the man blocking out does not have to hesitate but can simply step with his outside foot and then go.

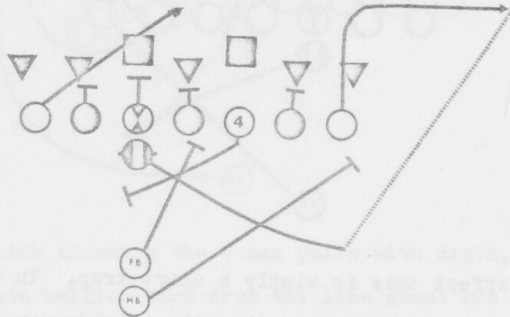
Type VII - Action Pass Blocking Technique

Rule for Action Pass Blocking -

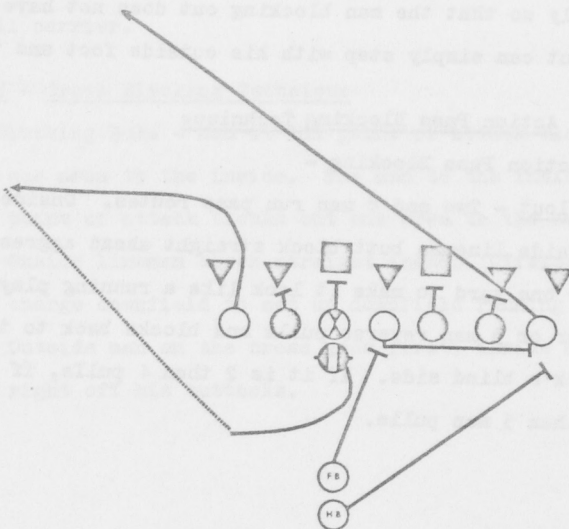
Rollout - Two and 8 men run pass routes. Onside and offside lineman butt block straight ahead aggressively for one yard to make it look like a running play. Four or 5 men reverse pulls and blocks back to the 1 back's blind side. If it is 2 then 4 pulls, if it is 8 then 5 man pulls.

Bootleg - Two and 8 men run pass routes. Onside and offside lineman butt block aggressively straight ahead for one yard. Four or 5 man pulls to the opposite side of the point of attack. If it is an 8 bootleg then 4 man pulls towards 2 man, if it is 2 bootleg then 5 man pulls toward 8 man.

Example - Rollout Pass Blocking (112 Rollout)



Example - Bootleg Pass Blocking (118 Bootleg)



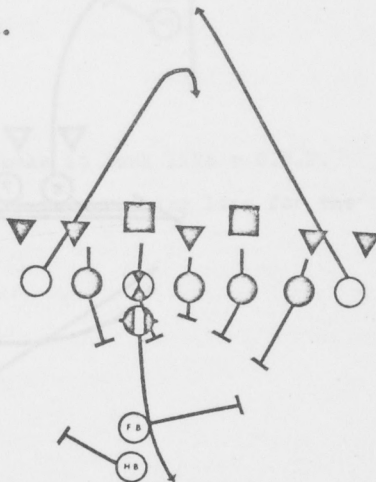
The reverse pull technique is used by the 4 and 5 man in the rollout play to give a false key to a linebacker. Execution of the technique begins with the 4 or 5 man pulling out of the line normally. The first step is a half step with the foot in the direction he is going. The second step is normal but on the third step he pivots, turns and sets up to block any defender (usually defensive end) who is coming from the quarterbacks blind side.

Type VIII - D.B.P. Blocking Technique

Rule for D.B.P. Blocking - Initial blow (butt block) is delivered to the opponent at the line of scrimmage. After the initial hit move back to set up protective pocket. Dictate opponents to the outside with your nose in his numbers. Under no circumstance let a defensive man get by to your inside!!

Example - D.B.P. Blocking

Note - offensive lineman automatically use D.B.P. Blocking when 50 series is called.



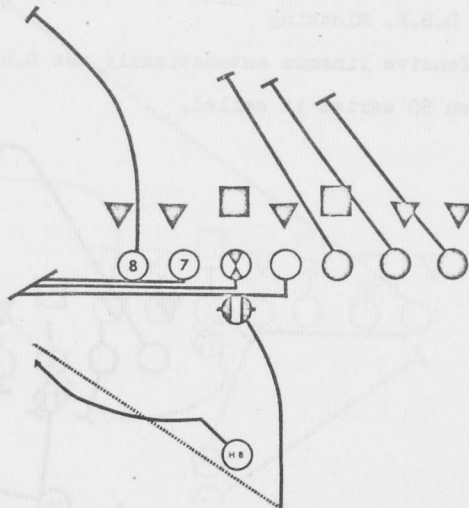
The offensive line must work as a unit, blasting out and then falling back and setting up, always keeping the feet moving and maintaining a good hitting position. Hit and move back and set up, hit and move back and set up always keeping the opponents going to the outside and maintaining the cup protection.

Type IX - Screen Blocking Technique

(2 and 8 men run pass patterns)

Rule for Screen Blocking - Offensive linemen step back immediately and set up D.B.P. protection. Hit your opponent once and then let him slide by. Three linemen on point of attack side move out to set up blocking for pass receiver. Remaining linemen charge downfield to block for ball carrier.

Example - Screen Blocking (149 Screen)

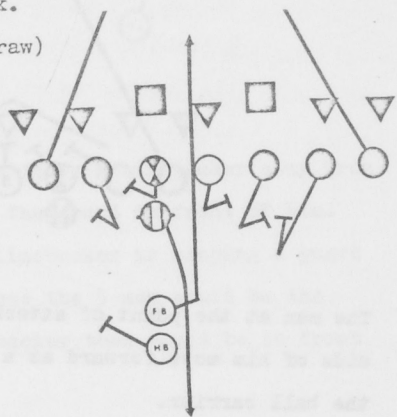


Offensive linemen must make it look like D.B.P. blocking. Then they must make it look as if the defense is getting through to the quarterback. The better job they do of faking, the more chance the play has of being successful!

Type X - Draw Blocking Technique

Draw Blocking Rule - Two and 8 men run pass routes. Remaining offensive linemen set up immediately in D.B.P. formation and then when they hear ball carrier yell "go" they hit out aggressively driving their man away from the point of attack.

Example - Draw Blocking (135 Draw)

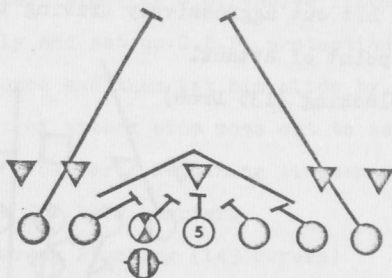


Offensive linemen must make it look like a D.B.P. and then hit out aggressively to form running lane for the ball carrier.

Type XII - Wedge Blocking Technique

Rule for Wedge Blocking - The point of attack man blocks straight ahead. Two men on either side of him "hook-up" shoulders to point of man's hip to form a wedge with point of attack man at the point of the wedge.

Example - Wedge Blocking (114 Wedge)

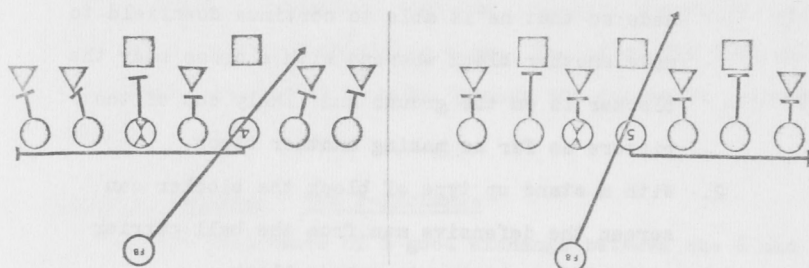


The man at the point of attack and the two linemen on either side of him move forward as a unit simply clearing a way for the ball carrier.

Type XIII - Key Breakers Technique

Rule for Key Breakers - Man at the point of attack pulls to his normal side. Players on either side drive your man away from the point of attack.

Example - Key Breaker (114 Key Breaker)



A key breaker is used to decoy a linebacker away from the point of attack by pulling the guard in front of him. This play is only used when a linebacker is keeping a guard closely. Against an even defense the 5 man would be the point of attack since the linebacker then would be in front of him.

Downfield Blocking Technique

Blocking downfield requires more mobility and a great deal more aggressiveness and perseverance than at the line of scrimmage where the blocker is only one to two yards away from the defensive man. When blocking downfield a lineman takes the defensive man whichever way is most convenient for himself and the ball carrier runs off his block.

The "butt block" is the type of downfield block employed here and the cross body or roll block is discouraged for several reasons:

1. The blocker is still standing after one block is made so that he is able to continue downfield to make another block whereas with a cross body the blocker is on the ground and likely out of the picture as far as making another block.
2. With a stand up type of block the blocker can screen the defensive man from the ball carrier without even having to make a block.
3. The blocker is in a much superior and safer hitting position with a "butt block" as the blocker is not exposing a very vulnerable part of his body as he is with a cross body (ribs, kidney, hips).

A good ball carrier will set up a downfield block for the blocker with his running.



eg. cuts to inside to draw defense man over and sets up block to inside and then cuts off the block to the outside.

The blocker simply puts his nose to the numbers of the defense man and drives him away keeping contact with the man until the ball carrier has passed.

Desire and aggressiveness can make up for deficiencies in technique in downfield blocking. Lack of downfield blocking can ruin a good offensive play. Too often the ball carrier "is on his own" after he gets through the defensive primary wall.

Center Technique - The T-Exchange

The importance of a good exchange between the 6 man and the quarterback cannot be overemphasized since this exchange initiates every offensive play with the exception of kicking situations. The centre's snap must be fast, hard and accurate. It is his responsibility to get the ball back to the quarterback's hands and from there it is the quarterback's responsibility to take the ball and execute his part of the play. It is important that the timing between 6 man and quarterback become automatic. The exchange must be exactly the same each time. The ball must be brought up exactly on the predetermined count; too early or too late could ruin the play.

The 6 man takes his regular stance. Both arms are extended fully and the grip on the ball is with both hands placed exactly the same. The laces should be at the top and both thumbs are placed parallel to it about the middle of the ball. The fingers are spread comfortably around the

centre of the ball and apply the same pressure from each side. There should only be a very light amount of pressure down on the ball. The importance of using two hands on the ball is quite obvious, doubly so if the 6 man has small hands:

- more accurate.
- better grip on the ball in slippery conditions.

On the correct count the 6 man swings his right arm straight back while at the same time giving the ball one-quarter turn by rotating the forearm. The right arm is kept straight right up until the ball hits the quarterback's hands and he takes the ball. The left arm bends at the elbow and the left hand follows on the bottom of the ball until about the knee and then the right arm and hand finish the exchange.

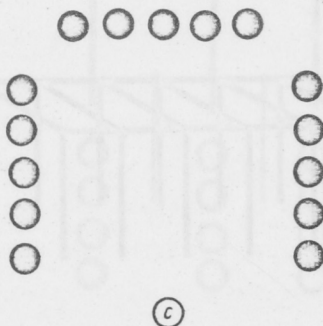
Drills for Offensive Line

The major premise upon all the drills used is that, drills, if they are to be of maximum value to the player should imitate as closely as possible the actual game situation. All of the drills are started at the most basic level possible and progress to the more complex levels with more equipment and modifications as they are necessary. All offensive line drills are started from the cadence used by the quarterback and the number on which the drill is started is constantly varied so the player becomes accustomed to the cadence and coming off the ball at the proper time.

Stance and Off the Ball Drills

Our offensive linemen come up to the line of scrimmage and assume what is known as a "ready" stance and then go into their offensive stance on the command "down". The "ready" stance is simply a normal stance but with both arms bent and resting on the knees. On the command "down" they drop the appropriate hand to the ground and they are ready to come off the ball.

The first drill that is used to teach and correct stance is what is known as a "square drill". It is set up with players in the form of a three-sided square with the coach standing at the open side (Fig. 4.23).

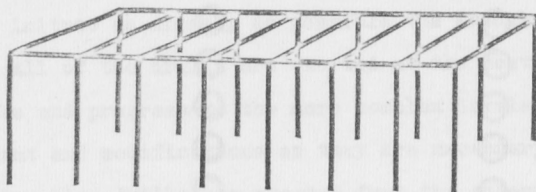


From this formation the coach can have players go from standing to "ready" stance to regular offensive stance. From this vantage point the coach can check each player's stance and the uniformity of movement from "ready" to "down" position.

A coach should constantly be checking stance in every drill a player does and correct all noticeable errors since a poor stance immediately puts a player at a disadvantage.

The "square drill" can also be used to teach coming off the ball correctly and together by having one side at a time charge across the square.

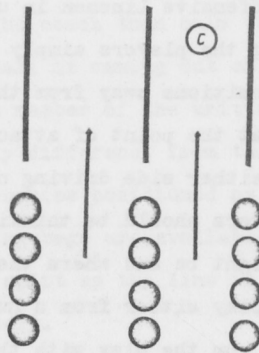
A chute device is also very useful in teaching proper movement from the offensive stance in the execution of delivery



of a blow. The chute used here is of metal pipe construction and has seven cubicles. The height of the bars is about three to three and one half feet from the ground.

This device gets across quite clearly that the charge from the offensive stance should be low and the feet must be moving.

To teach good balance a low centre of gravity in charging from an offensive stance, two x eights, ten to twelve feet long are placed parallel on the ground and the players start from an offensive stance and charge down the boards placing one foot on each side of the boards.



The 2 and 7-man sleds are also very valuable in teaching players to come off the ball fast and together. If one or more players are slower than the others then it is very noticeable and can be corrected.

Combinations and modifications of drills are also effective in teaching stance and off the ball such as using the boards in the chute. This puts together a low fast charge and wide base of support.

Dive Blocking Drills

Since dive blocking is all straight ahead blocking, teaching this is basic and probably the first type of blocking that would be taught.

The first step in teaching dive blocking would be lining up all the offensive linemen in units calling the point of attack and having the players simply charge out as a unit. The linemen three positions away from the point of attack cut downfield, the man at the point of attack driving out either way and the men on either side driving out away from the point of attack. The players should be thinking about where the man in their area might be and where they would take him.

Calling the play either from a huddle or from the ball and having the team run the play with the idea that each of the pads on the sled represents a defensive player. Combinations such as the chute and blocking bags in front is also a valuable teaching method. The players line up in the chute and a blocking bag is placed approximately one yard in front

of each section of the chute. A play is called and each lineman executes his assignment charging out from the chute and making contact with the bag.

The last step in teaching dive blocking would be lining up a defensive line and have an offensive unit run against them live. Again this should be run from a huddle to more closely imitate what players will see on game day.

On all of these blocking drills a certain distance should be set up that the offensive man has to run to, drive the bag past or drive his man past. This emphasizes holding the block for a definite period of time which is necessary if the ball carrier is to get through in actual game conditions.

The next logical step would be to set up blocking dummies as a defensive line and line up an offensive unit in front of them. The coach then calls the point of attack and the number the ball is coming out on. The offensive line charges out and each member of the unit executes a butt block on the bag. The only difference from the preceding drill being the blocking dummies positioned as defensive personnel. If not enough blocking bags are available to run a whole unit at once then simply split up the line in an appropriate place and run them separately.

Both this drill and the preceding drill should be run from a huddle as soon as the players understand fully what is expected of them. This gives them practise in setting up the huddle, hearing the play called, breaking the huddle and

setting up on the line of scrimmage.

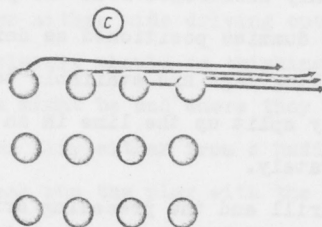
The 7-man sled is also valuable for teaching dive blocking since it is all straight ahead blocking.

Pulling Drills

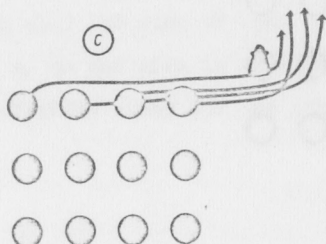
The first step in teaching pulling is to demonstrate and show exactly how each movement is done. Then with all the linemen in the three-sided square formation, have them all go through the technique step by step. The coach should watch each individual closely and correct any mistakes.

Two very common errors are not pushing off with both down hand and feet and not staying low enough as they come out of their offensive stance.

The next step would be to have them line up in three or four lines and have them pull straight out to one side and then to the other, emphasizing that the first step should be with the foot on the side to which they are pulling.



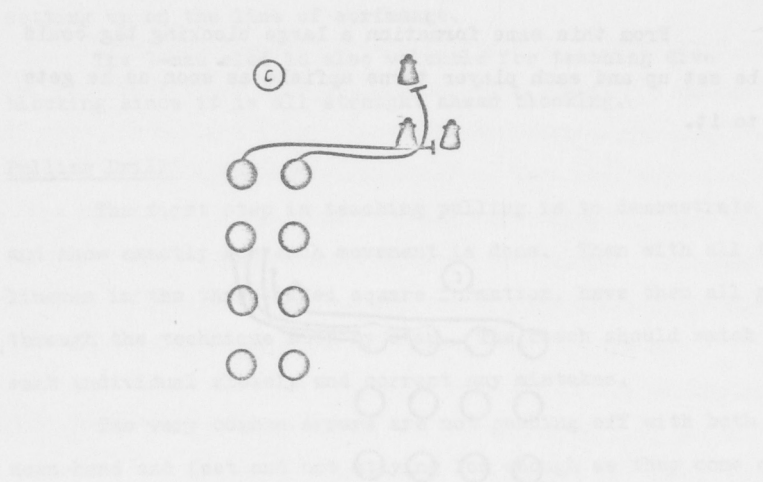
From this same formation a large blocking bag could be set up and each player turns upfield as soon as he gets to it.



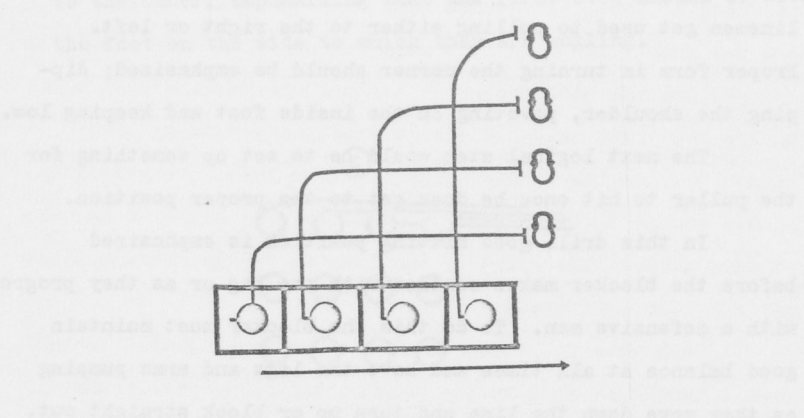
The drill should also be done to each side so that all linemen get used to pulling either to the right or left. Proper form in turning the corner should be emphasized; dipping the shoulder, pivoting on the inside foot and keeping low.

The next logical step would be to set up something for the puller to hit once he does get to the proper position.

In this drill good hitting position is emphasized before the blocker makes contact with the bag or as they progress with a defensive man. To do this the blocker must maintain good balance at all times and have the legs and arms pumping as they move down the line and turn up or block straight out.

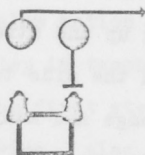


Another good drill for pulling is using the chute and blocking dummies.



Linemen line up in the chute facing one end. On the count they pull out of the chute and turn up and butt block the dummy. It should be set up so each has the same distance to travel and hence should all hit at the same time. This drill is also useful to practise downfield blocking.

The two-man sled can also be used to practise pulling. Have two men line up on the sled in an offensive stance and have one man hit straight ahead and the other pull out behind him (Fig. 4.30).



The 7-man sled can also be used to practise pulling by calling a play which calls for one or more linemen to pull and have the others block straight ahead. This gives the player a vivid illustration that the rest of the line moves ahead and he moves along the line in the place where the other linemen were.

The last step would be to set up a drill where the offensive unit is set up against a defensive unit live and the puller pulls out and executes a block in an actual live situation.

Isolating certain areas of offense and defense and running them live are time savers in that only the people involved in the technique are used and also are closely imitating the game situation.

Post and Power Drills

In teaching post and power block the first step would be to demonstrate and have linemen go through the block in slow motion to get the idea of what is being done. The idea of the post man driving up and straight back and the power man applying the force from the side to drive the defense player down the line of scrimmage and away from the point of attack should be emphasized (Fig. 4.31).

Next, with the use of a blocking dummy and working in groups of three, the post and power block can be speeded up slowly until the players are going all out.

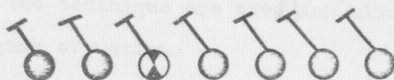
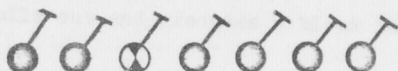
After players have achieved a reasonable measure of skill a two-on-one live drill can be set up isolating the post and power block.

The last step would be to use it in an actual situation running against a whole defensive unit.

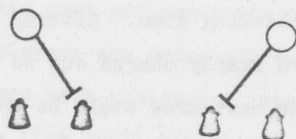


Blocking Down Drills

Demonstrating and slow motion step by step procedures would also be the first step in teaching blocking down. It must be emphasized that the first step is with the foot to side in which they are moving. Also the fact that the defensive man is going to be charging ahead and allowance must be made for this in blocking down. Setting offensive units and having the players simply charge out so that they would contact the man in the next area would be the next progression.

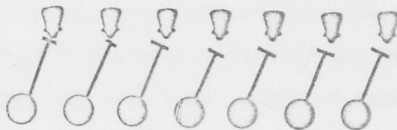


The next step would be to set up a one-on-one situation with a blocking dummy and having the player butt block it away from an imaginary point of attack.



Then setting up a whole offensive line with dummies and having an offensive unit block down would be the next logical step.

● The chute and blocking bag combination is also valuable in teaching this type of blocking.

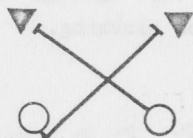


The last stage of the progression would be to set up a dive drill either isolating one part of the line or using the whole line at once.

Cross Blocking Drills

A cross blocking is actually putting together two skills which have already been discussed. These are blocking down and a short trap block.

The cross block should be demonstrated and players go through it in slow motion. Next working in fours and with two blocking dummies the players should practise executing



the block slowly at first and gradually build up until they are hitting out at full speed. Speed must be emphasized in blocking down since the man coming out has to go behind him. After a reasonable level of skill has been reached a live drill should be set up. First two-on-two and then in a situation where players can see it as a part of a whole offensive play.

Drop Back Pass Blocking Drills

In teaching D.B.P. blocking players must first get a total picture of what is taking place. We demonstrate what each player is to do in getting back to the protective cup and why they must protect to their inside.

Then have them line up as an offensive unit, step out as if blocking and then move back to set up the cup emphasizing that the feet are moving at all times and they are on balance and in a good hitting position.

Then set up a one-on-one situation with a defender with an air dummy and an offensive lineman. Instruct the offensive lineman to drive out aggressively and make contact, move back and set up, step forward and make contact again as the defender rushes and then move back and set up again and repeat this over and over again until it becomes automatic.

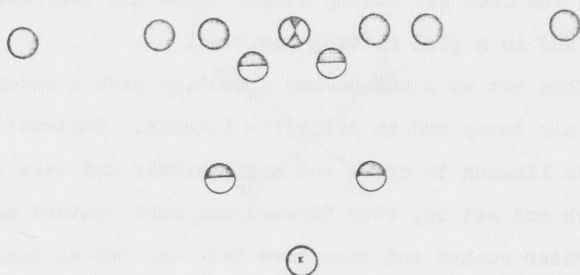
Next take the air dummy away and repeat the same drill live.

Now set up the offensive unit against a defensive unit with air dummies at first and then live. Emphasize teamwork at all times since it only takes one defender to get through to ruin the whole play.

Punt, P.A.T. and F.G. Line Blocking Drills

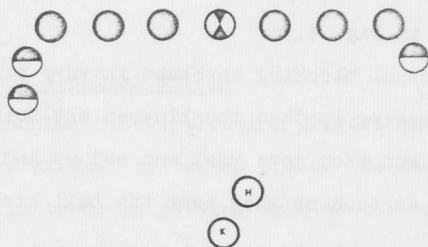
The offensive line formation used here for punts is as described in Fig. 4.36.

The actual blocking involved is very similar to drop back pass blocking in that the linemen are told to hit out aggressively and then move back and set up and then hit again. They release as soon as they hear the ball kicked and go downfield.



The steps involved in teaching punt protection blocking are very similar to D.B.P. blocking and the same progression should be used.

P.A.T. and F.G. line blocking are exactly the same. The formation used is described in Fig. 4.37.



The linemen line up very tight, toe-to-toe. Upon the snap of the ball each lineman steps forward with his inside foot and stays low and in a good hitting position. Everyone protects to the inside and no one should be moved from the position he establishes.

This type of blocking is best practised with the whole offensive line together. First a rushing unit with air dummies should be used and then progress to a live drill.

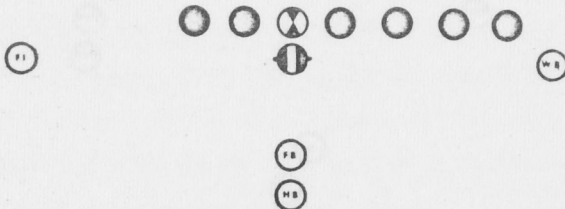
To make practise time on the field more useful and efficient each drill that is to be used in a practise session should be covered in a pre-practise chalk-talk session. This eliminates many questions on the field which consume valuable practise time.

CHAPTER 5

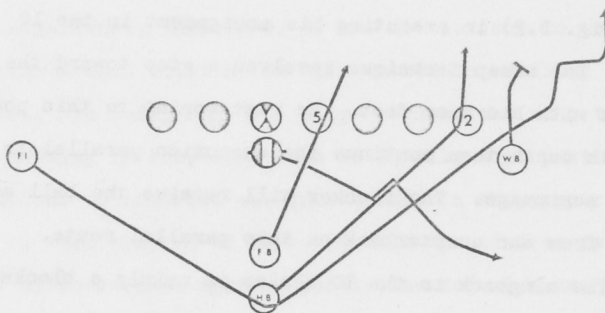
OFFENSIVE BACKFIELD

Our approach to teaching offensive backfield play in our particular system is to begin with an explanation of the techniques involved. We illustrate by film and diagram in team meetings as well as through the play book, the particular routes involved in our offense and the technique involved in executing the particular pass or run route. Since our passing routes were dealt with in Chapter 2 our concern here will be only for the running game.

Each offensive series is numbered chronologically in order of presentation. That is, the 10 series is taught and practised first, the 20 series second, the 30 series third and so on. Thus we will further delimit our consideration of running routes in this chapter to our first series, that is, the 10 series.



Our offensive backfield is aligned in the I formation as described in Fig. 5.1. To execute their responsibilities in the 10 series the FB and HB follow a slant route to the point of attack while the flanker executes a sweep route and the WB is a blocker. As described in Chapter 4 each of our offensive linemen carries a number and this indicates the point of attack to our ballcarrier as well as his lead blocker. In the execution of a particular play in the 10 series the offensive back is running at an offensive lineman not at a hole in the line.



The 10 series is a slant at our strong side be it either the 100, 200 or 300 formation. The offensive fullback steps with his near foot and aims between the legs of our 4 man. In the execution of his basic 4 play, which is properly designated as a 114, our fullback will sprint at

the 4 man from his position and then turn upfield so that he is squarely facing the goal line.

Our halfback executes his basic play, that is a 112 in much the same manner as our fullback. He will step with his near foot splitting the feet of our 2 man and sprint to the 2 man's position turning upfield squarely facing the goal line when he arrives at that point. Our flanker may be utilized as either a pass receiver or running back. He is given the authority and responsibility to adjust his position from within one yard of our 8 man to 20 yards away from the 8 man. He may also elect a pass route or the sweep route (Fig. 5.2) in executing his assignment in the 10 series. The sweep technique involves a step toward the halfback with his near foot. He must sprint to this position with depth then continue the execution parallel to the line of scrimmage. The flanker will receive the ball as a handoff from our quarterback on this parallel route.

The wingback in the 10 series is mainly a blocker and pass receiver, although he is the ball carrier in our reverse which is designated as the 117 counter. To execute his technique he will begin either as a slotback or wingback and execute his assignment from either position. The 10 series gives us mainly a strong side attack and by flip-flopping our offensive line we can set the strong side attack to either the right or left. At the same time we employ the balanced line to attack either right or left.

The Quarterback Technique

In the selection of this player our primary concern is one who has good football sense. That is, a player who under game conditions can select a play to suit a given play situation and execute it with skill and poise. He must have the ability to select the proper play designed to elicit a certain reaction from the defense then take advantage of this reaction to run another play. Thus staying with the action and during the game evaluating our individual and team performance against the defensive reaction and performance. This qualification demands considerable experience, therefore, we are not anxious to employ a new quarterback until he is well versed in handling our offense. In referring to a play "we mean the run, the roll out, bootleg or dropback" each is equally important in our system and we instruct our quarterback in the proper execution of each play as we have set them up and also as to their effectiveness against particular defenses and particular defensive adjustments. So we would not allow our QB to run a 114 dive then switch to a 212 just for the sake of a probe to determine defensive action. We want him to test the whole series so that we can assess the defensive reaction before he adjusts his call to a different series or play within that series.

We don't consider it necessary that our QB be a "holler guy" or a dynamic driving force behind the great

machine but he must be an astute thinker who is cognizant of the strengths or weaknesses of our offensive personnel and of our opponent's defensive personnel. We would also prefer that he has some playing experience on defense so that he is keenly aware of defensive techniques and reactions.

6 Man - Quarterback Exchange

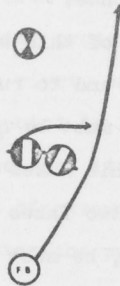
The QB aligns himself in close proximity to the 6 man. The exact distance will depend on the size of our QB in relation to the size of our 6 man. However the technique and stance of each of the 6 man and the QB are the same regardless of their relative sizes. The QB assumes a square stance with his feet, about shoulder width apart. The weight is forward on the feet, knees are slightly bent, hips are flexed, back straight and he is looking straight down-field. After assuming this stance he extends his right arm and places the back of his right hand and wrist firmly against the seat of the centre. The fingers are well spread and touching the seat of the centre. Enough pressure is exerted by the QB against the seat of the centre to be sure that his hand is firmly in place. The thumb of the non-throwing hand is placed parallel with the thumb of the throwing hand, which is against the centre's seat. The heel of the non-throwing hand is placed against the heel of the throwing hand. The fingers of the non-throwing hand are also spread and separated from the throwing hand a little farther than the width of the ball. When the 6 man snaps

the ball he deliberately aims to hit the heel of the throwing hand. The QB then raises the non-throwing hand to take hold of the football with both hands. After receiving the football the QB's first move is to one-quarter turn the ball and bring it close to the belt buckle so that it is held in both hands and in close to his body.

As the 6 man raises the ball to the QB he will start his charge for the block. To facilitate the movement of the 6 man the QB rides the 6 man away for an instant to be sure that the gap between himself and the 6 man is not increased. For this technique it is practised between our 6 man and QB's during the specialist drills. If problems arise in this area we prescribe extra-specialist drill for the QB's and 6 men involved.

The Pivot

After receiving the ball from the 6 man our QB for the 10 series execution performs a regular pivot (Fig. 5.3).



This technique involves having our QB step with his strong side foot parallel with the line of scrimmage to the FB. The ball is extended with both hands to the FB who executes his 14 play technique. If a fake is required the QB extends the ball to the FB with both hands on his first step then brings the ball away from him as he is stepping with the left foot (100 formation) which will carry him to the 12 play.

Whereas the 14 play is a dive and does not allow for a long fake the 12 play is designed to allow the QB to ride the fake to the HB. The ride is designed to hold the defensive end long enough to ensure a good block by our trapping 5 man. Thus immediately after his left foot step the QB reaches for the HB once again with both arms extended and follows the HB with a full arm sweep to the 2 point of attack.

A step with the right foot puts the QB in close proximity with the sweeping flanker. The QB simply executes a two handed handoff and allows the flanker the freedom to determine his running route.

The slant routes of this series allow for our FB and HB to leave quickly and to run at full speed without hesitation, thus our QB must be quick getting away from our 6 man and very sure of his fakes and handoffs. He is responsible for executing two fakes and a handoff on each 10 series execution. Thus, he must strive toward precision in execution as well as speed of execution. If he is the

type of player described in the earlier part of this section, that is an astute thinker who can see beyond just the mechanical aspects of the offensive series, these facets of the fine points of execution will not be hard to explain to him nor would it be hard for him to understand them. His reaction to these details, particularly his awareness of the defensive reaction will aid in determining whether he is the kind of player who can effectively be our quarterback.

Each of our offensive series is augmented by a rollout and bootleg. The technique for our QB is basically the same for both. The 10 series rollout, which we call a 112 begins with our oneback executing as he would for the 10 series running plays. Our FB and HB take the first and second steps toward their basic running route of the 10 series, then veer to the outside and set up to block at the 2 man. Our flanker is assigned a pass route from his flanking position of the 10 series. Our flanker is assigned a pass route. The QB executes the regular pivot and sprints to a position about five yards deep of our 2 man behind the HB who will give him blocking protection at that position. After the execution of the pivot, once again with the ball held firmly by both hands point to belt buckle, the QB raises the ball to chest height, it remains in this position until he reaches his point of execution behind the HB. From this position he now executes the pass as practised in the specialist drill.

The bootleg in the 10 series or what we call the 118 begins as a regular 10 series running play. The FB and HB sprint to their basic routes. The flanker once again executes a pass route. The QB now executes a reverse pivot (Fig. 5.4). He will offer a fake to our FB as he continues his reverse pivot. The execution of the pivot is basically



the same, however, he must push away from the 6 man with his strong side foot (right foot in 100 formation) with greater force to bring himself around farther to the short side. As soon as his left foot touches the ground he will sprint to a depth of five to six yards behind our 8 man's position. The QB is offered no protection in the immediate area of the throw, therefore, he must be cognizant of the defensive end on our short side and adjust his throwing position according to the charge of the defensive end. Usually the

bootleg is thrown while the QB is still in his forward movement. If he finds that he does have the time he may position himself as in the rollout, otherwise he must judge the defensive end's charge and adjust his throwing position accordingly.

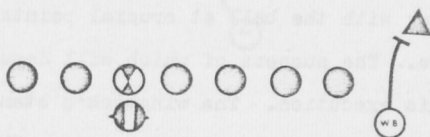
The Wingback Technique

Our wingback is the most versatile of our offensive backs. He must be able to block effectively. He is called upon as a pass receiver as well as a ball carrier. Thus in this player we look for one who has good hands, good speed and good blocking ability. Whereas our FB, HB and flankers are more specialized in their performance, the wingback will be called upon to execute his techniques of blocking, catching and running with the ball at crucial points in our entire offense. The success of which will depend to a large degree upon his execution. The wingback's stance may be either a three-point or a two-point stance. The two-point stance is favoured since he will align himself as both a slotback and a wingback depending on the set call. Unless designated he will align himself as a wingback, a yard behind and a yard outside of our 2 man. In this position he will have a better view of his immediate area of responsibility in the two-point stance.

The wingback takes his position with his toes about a yard behind our offensive line. His feet may be aligned either toes even or with a stagger of one foot. The weight

is forward on the feet with his knees and hips slightly flexed and arms stretched with hands on the knees. His head is up and looking straight downfield.

In the 10 series the wingback's primary responsibility is blocking the defensive end or the corner linebacker. He may be called on for this responsibility in either the slotback or wingback positions. As a slotback he may execute the assignment by driving straight ahead between our 2 and 3 men or by stepping with his outside foot and going around our 2 man to reach the corner linebacker as shown in Fig. 5.5.



On contact with the corner linebacker he executes a butt block as described in our fundamental drills. On the rollout play and the dropback series the wingback is often a primary receiver. The wingback's only running route is the 7 play

which is the counter of the 10 series. To execute from the 100 formation the wingback steps with his left foot at an angle back to the HB and sprints toward the HB position. He accepts the ball from the QB at the deepest point of his route, about two yards short of the HB's position, plants his left foot and cuts sharply into the line at the 7 man. At this point he has turned from an angle away from the line of scrimmage to an angle toward the line of scrimmage with his head up looking for the appropriate block.

Our wingback's overall objective with regard to his position in the offense is to control the defensive perimeter. We call this flare control and his execution in blocking and running pass routes against the corner linebacker gives him the tools to execute this control. A certain degree of latitude with regard to his position in relation to the corner linebakcer is allowed to give him freedom to execute flare control. For example, if our wingback thinks that he can better accomplish flare control by aligning himself a little wider than a wingback position he is given freedom to do just that. Provided his adjustment does not interfere with the designed execution of a particular play he is free to make any adjustment that he wishes.

As a regular set the wingback is aligned outside the 2 man. If our QB wishes a wingback on a particular play he will designate this by adding the words wing set to the play call. For example, a 112 play will tell our WB to align

himself as a WB and block the corner linebacker out toward the sideline. Whereas a slot set 112 call would tell our WB to align as a slotback and block the corner linebacker out toward the sideline by going between the 2 and 3 men or around the 2 man. If the WB is instructed to align himself in the slot set he has no alternative but to set himself as a regular slotback. This position dictates that his assignments be carried out with restriction to the variation in his position.

The Fullback Technique

The fullback in our system is basically a power runner and blocker. He must have good get away speed. The faster the better. In fact we look for this player as the fastest starting back in the backfield. He is called upon to fill in the offensive line for pulling guards and to control the movements of the inside linebackers. Thus he must know and understand as well as appreciate the finite points of faking as well as being an effective power running ball carrier. He need not possess or strive for the finite points of blocking which our linemen are expected to perfect. However, he must be willing to hit hard and create havoc every time he starts at the line of scrimmage; be it to carry the ball or to fill for a pulling guard.

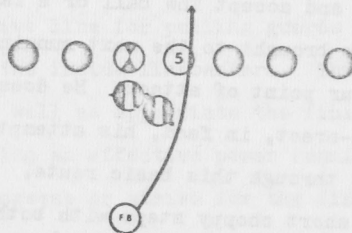
The fullback assumes an elongated three-point stance. We prefer that his toes are even although we will make concession and allow him to have one foot back slightly.

The FB aligns himself directly behind the QB with his feet shoulder width apart, weight forward on the feet, forearms across the thighs, head up and back straight. When the QB commands "down" at the start of the cadence the FB reaches forward and down with his right hand, placing it on the ground so that his weight is evenly distributed between his two feet and his right hand. The fingers of the right hand are extended so that he is resting on the tips of his fingers. In this position the right hand of the FB is approximately one yard behind the heels of the QB.

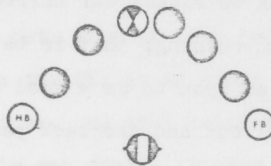
In the 10 series the FB executes his responsibility beginning with a pushoff from his hand and feet, stepping first with the right foot which is aimed at the outside leg of our 4 man. His arms will immediately come to the ball carrying position and accept the ball or a fake from our QB as his left leg is brought to the next running step. The FB dives into the four point of attack. He does not attempt to run erect or semi-erect, in fact, his attempt is to run at his stance height through this basic route. This dictates that he run with short choppy steps with both legs moving in very rapid succession. He does not look for blocks or running lanes until he is well passed the 4-man's position. To this point he is only concerned with getting to the 4-man's position as quickly and with as much force as possible. This technique is consistent with all 10 series plays. A self-evaluation of the FB's job is the reaction which he

elicits from the linebackers. This is explained to the FB in some detail and both the coaches and the FB's may evaluate his performance on the basis of this linebacker control. Since much of our outside success with the 10 series, particularly the 12 play is dependent upon his controlling the inside linebackers we consider this an extremely important part of the 10 series.

On dropback pass the fullback is a cup blocker on the outside of our three man. To get to his proper blocking position in our dropback series, the FB will start toward the line of scrimmage, as described in Fig. 5.6, in an attempt to have the interior linebackers hold for just an

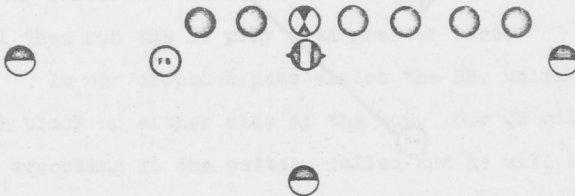


instant, then scramble to the position behind and outside our 3 man as shown in the Fig. 5.7. In this position he will block as any of our offensive linemen.



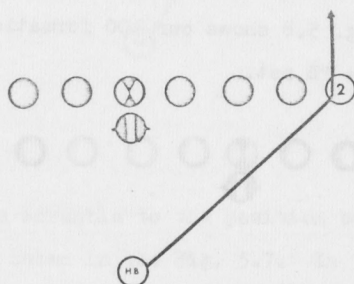
The pass catching responsibilities of the FB are limited. We prefer that he be a power runner first, a blocker second and a pass catcher third.

To take advantage of the FB's blocking ability and his pass catching ability, our QB is able to place him in a wingback position on our short side by adding the call FB set to a given play. The FB set call would position our FB a yard behind and a yard outside of our 8 men. From this position he has a good blocking angle for the wide play to the short side and also is in a position of advantage to run a pass pattern. Fig. 5.8 shows our 100 formation with a regular set plus the FB set.



The Halfback Technique

Like our fullback we expect our halfback to do a good deal of our head on running, that is between our 2 and 8 men. He is also called upon to do a good deal of blocking particularly on the roll out and dropback passes. He will not be called upon to do the same type of heavy hitting that we expect from our FB but will have to concentrate more on faking with the ball and have better balance and coordination which are needed for his more intricate running routes. We like to use him more as a pass receiver than our FB and in fact would liken our HB to a halfback in the T formation. The HB assumes a two-point stance about two feet behind the FB. His feet are positioned with toes even, knees and hips slightly flexed, arms extended and hands resting on the knees. His head is up looking straight ahead into the back of our QB. His basic route in the 10 series is the 112 play (Fig. 5.9). To execute the technique necessary to carry out



his responsibility he will step with the right foot pointed at the 2 man, take a normal running stride with his left foot then bring both arms up into position to accept a hand-off or fake from the QB, as he steps with the right foot for the second time. He will maintain this running posture for approximately two stride lengths before either taking the ball or carrying out a fake.

The HB's basic route is designed to control the inside linebacker's movement. Like the FB then he is instructed to consider linebacker control a very basic part of his assignment. Thus if he is doing his job effectively as both a ball carrier and a faker, he should influence the inside linebacker. He is told that unless he is tackled when he is faking he is not doing his job properly. Or he is executing his play against a linebacker who is not doing his job and in that case we instruct him to inform the quarterback who will then give him the ball and let him gain valuable yards for us.

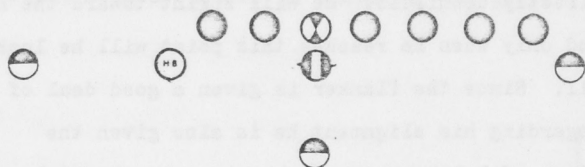
If our HB is very effective and becomes a proficient ball carrier the respect accorded him by the defense may assist us in running the 11 play. That is, should the corner linebacker hesitate or move toward the 42 play we will then run the 11 play with greater ease.

In our dropback pass series the HB, unlike the FB will block on either side of the cup. Our QB will instruct him according to the pattern called and he will execute

according to that play call. On all dropback patterns screens and draws, the HB will step toward either the 2 or 8 man in an attempt to hold the inside linebackers for an instant. Since he is given running plays to both the strong side and short side this is nothing more than a one-step fake before he assumes his blocking position. In each case the blocking technique is the same and he sets up beside our 3 man on the strong side or our 7 man on the short side. In either of these positions he will likely be responsible for blocking the defensive end and forcing him to the outside of the cup. Fig. 5.7 illustrates the HB position in the cup on the short side, should he be instructed to block on the strong side he would be in the position taken up by our FB in Fig. 5.7.

The HB is involved in more offense to our short side than our strong side. Other series of plays beyond the 10 involve his taking a pitch out to the short side, slanting to the short side, taking a screen pass to the short side and running most of his pass patterns to the short side. The individual technique involved in his pass routes are practised in specialist drills and he is responsible for the entire gamut of our pass patterns. To better take advantage of his pass catching ability we may set him in the wingback position on our short side as our FB is positioned in Fig. 5.8. From this position he may be called upon to run a pass route, or block for the short side running

game. To set the HB as a wingback on the short side the QB simply adds the words HB set to the play call, thus a 114 call may become a HB set 114 call. When the HB set is called the rest of our backs assume the same positions that they would have taken had the HB been in the regular set. Thus, our HB set would change its appearance as described in Fig. 5.10.



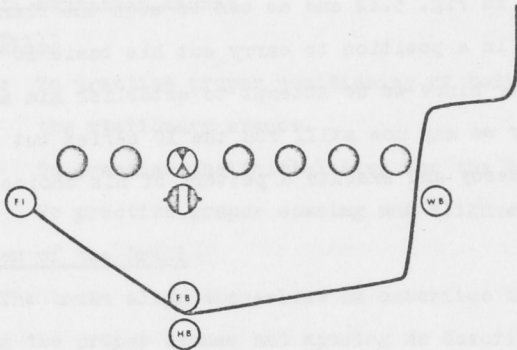
The Flanker Technique

The play of our flanker is designed for outside running which requires a good deal of speed and pass catching. He is employed in the wingback as well as the flanker positions in our formations. In order to execute his basic running plays most effectively he will have to have a good turn of speed as well as a discerning eye for the blocking which is set up for him. Since he is running to the outside on most of his running plays the blocks designed for him are

not as rigid as they will be for either the FB or the HB. Therefore he must be ever aware of where his blockers are and be able to adjust his speed to the blocking situation as it arises. In our passing game he is always a primary receiver.

The stance of the flanker, like the HB, is a 2 point stance. His toes are even, knees and hips flexed, arms straight with hands on the knees, his head is up and he looks directly downfield. He will sprint toward the HB position and only when he reaches this point will he look for the ball. Since the flanker is given a good deal of latitude regarding his alignment he is also given the responsibility of being at the right place at the right time for the handoff. So if he is flanked ten yards, the flanker will have to start in motion to be at the handoff point at the right time. The quarterback will be prepared to fake or handoff at the 2 man's position and it is the flanker's responsibility to adjust the speed of his route to be at this point to accept the fake or handoff. At this point he will turn upfield and read the reaction of the corner linebacker before he makes his next move. If the corner linebacker has been blocked out he will turn upfield and attempt to run straight downfield to the goal line. If the corner linebacker has been blocked in he will turn upfield toward the corner linebacker, then turn sharply parallel with the line of scrimmage and sprint for the sideline,

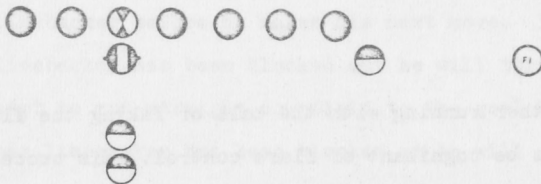
having outdistanced the corner linebacker he will now turn upfield again at his discretion. However these moves will depend upon the corner linebacker's play which may vary from a contain to a crashing to a hold and wait technique. Thus, the only assistance we can offer him is to practise the three different situations and assess his judgment in meeting the right move with the right situation in a game or scrimmage. However his judgment at this point is extremely important to his success in executing the play.



Whether running with the ball or faking the flanker must always be cognizant of flare control. His success to a large measure is dependent upon his ability to get a reaction from either the corner linebakcer or the defensive

halfback or both. This reaction is termed flare control and by so influencing the reaction of the corner linebacker and defensive halfback we in effect control the flare of the defense. The flanker has the greatest responsibility in flare control on both running plays and pass.

To take advantage of the flanker's ability as a pass receiver he is set in a flanking position a yard behind and at least five yards wide of our 8 man on the short side. The QB may flip flop the flanker to the strong side also, by simply adding the words "flanker set" to the play call. That is 112 may become a flanker set 112. The flanker set is described in Fig. 5.12 and as can be seen the flanker is no longer in a position to carry out his basic 10 assignment. However since we do attempt to establish him as a pass receiver we may now still run the 10 series but allow him to be a decoy and execute a pattern of his choice. This



set, in the 10 series, is not just employed for variety but serves a real purpose in execution. For example our flanker may choose to run a V out pattern and find that the defensive halfback on his side does not react to his pattern. He is instructed to inform the QB of this reaction and the QB would follow at the proper time by repeating the same play action and executing the rollout. Thus the play would appear to be a 10 series running play, however, our QB would execute his new play technique, fake the run and throw to either the flanker, wingback or 2 man.

Offensive Backfield Drills

Stance Drill

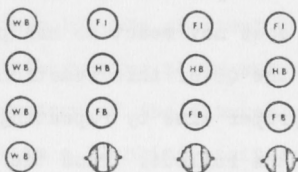
Purpose: To practise proper positioning of body parts in the stationary stance.

To practise the initial step for the basic route.

To practise proper spacing and alignment.

Execution of the Drill

The backs align themselves as described in Fig. 5.13 assuming the proper stance and spacing as described earlier for each of the five backs. The drill is conducted by the coach in three parts. The first or stationary phase of the drill is simply correcting and adjusting the stance and alignment of each of the players for proper positioning. The QB, FB and HB are arranged according to their own squads. This is done to insure that the HB on our first squad will become acquainted with the peculiarities or characteristics



(C)

of the FB behind which he aligns himself. The flanker and wingbacks align themselves according to the game situation so that these players become accentuated to their relative positions in the backfield as well as practising the stance. However since our QB, HB and FB particularly are in close relationship even small deviations by one player require an adjustment in positioning by another player. Therefore in this part of the drill we instruct our players to carefully assess the stance and alignment of the man in front of him so that he knows not only his positioning but the positioning of his teammate. The second phase of the drill involves a dry run. In this phase the 1 back repeats the cadence and each of the backs step toward his basic route. If we are preparing the 10 series the back will step toward the basic route of that series. If we are preparing

the 20 series he will step toward the basic route of that series. We consider this phase particularly important. Hence, if our back takes the first step in the right direction his execution will be consistent.

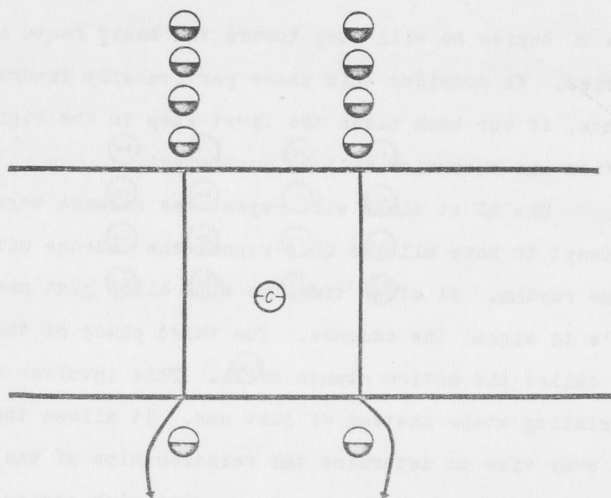
The QB at times will repeat the cadence together to attempt to have all the QB's repeat the cadence with the same rhythm. At other times we will allow just one of the QB's to signal the cadence. The third phase of the drill is called the action stance drill. This involves three sprinting steps instead of just one. It allows the coach an over view to determine the relationships of the running paths of each of the backs, in a particular series. And allows the QB to progress through two of his three fakes of a series.

Form Running

Purpose - to develop efficient running form.

Execution of the Drill

The backs align themselves in two lines as shown in Fig. 5.14 and execute the drills in pairs according to the coach's command. On the command "go" the first two backs run in place with high knee action and arms pumping in a deliberate fashion. The arms are bent at the elbow and the back is instructed to bring the hand up at least as high as the shoulder on the upswing and to bring the elbow behind the mid-line of the body on the down swing. The knees are brought up waist high on each step. Arms and legs both are



forced to a maximum rate of movement for from five to ten seconds. After this time the coach gives his second command which is "lean". On this command the backs executing the same motion with arms and legs lean forward as far as possible until they naturally overbalance forward at which time the coach gives the final command of "sprint". On this third command the backs sprint forward at least five yards and re-align themselves in two lines once again.

Hard Running Drill

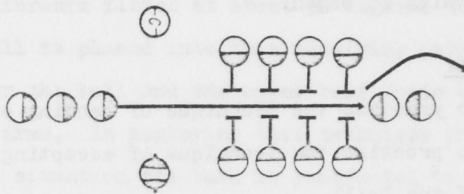
Purpose: To practise running against resistance.

To practise taking the handoff and being hit in the process of taking the handoff.

To practise running with a wide base and maintaining balance and forward momentum.

Execution of the Drill

The players align themselves as described in Fig. 5.15. Each dummy is an air dummy held by another back. The back executing the drill begins in his proper offensive stance regardless of whether he is a FB, HB, flanker or WB. The



quarterback executes a regular pivot from either the right or left hand side of the ball carrier. The first two dummies are set a yard in advance of the QB. This will allow the ball carrier approximately three steps before he is hit by the first pair of dummies. The dummy holders are instructed to move in and squeeze the ball carrier at shoulder height in an attempt to knock him off balance. To properly execute the technique of running against resistance we instruct the ball carrier to keep his head up at all cost, to keep both

hands on the ball and hold it firmly and to keep his legs spread at shoulder width, to move them as fast as possible and to actually fight the resistance with his entire body. The drill is complete when either the ball carrier has passed the alley defined by the six dummies or when the men holding the dummies have battered the ball carrier to the ground. The drill progresses until all ball carriers have run the ball through the six dummies once then the dummy holders are replaced and the drill is regrouped at the opposite end to which it began.

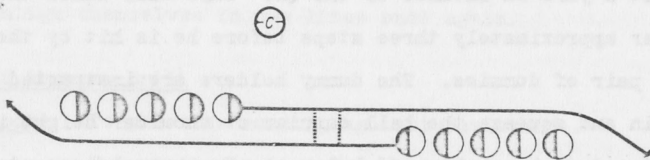
Chain Handoff

Purpose: To practise the technique of handing off the ball.

To practise the technique of accepting the handoff.

Execution of the Drill

Although most of the backs involved will not be primarily concerned with handing off the ball but rather accepting the ball as a handoff. We believe that the best way to



teach a particular technique is to instill an appreciation on the part of the athlete of both sides of the technique. The chain handoff drill allows the practise of this technique with a minimum of time lost in setting up a drill.

In accepting a handoff the back will raise the arm on the side of the ball so that the forearm is up across the chest with the fingers of the hands spread and slightly flexed in a relaxed but not limp fashion. The hand on the opposite side from the ball will be held close to the body with the forearm flexed at about 90 degrees to the upper arm. As the ball is placed into this receiving pocket both arms close over the ball and the upper body folds over the ball and both arms. In employing this technique in a game or scrimmage situation the back is instructed to run in this fashion until he is free of a congested area. When he is running in an open field he will grasp the ball near the point with the arm that has been placed across his chest and cradle the ball in the forearm of that arm and slide it to his side enabling him to run in a more natural fashion.

In the chain handoff drill we are not able to go this far with the technique of ball carrying. However this is employed and all backs are instructed in this procedure each time a handoff is used in any form. In the execution of the chain handoff drill the back after having received the ball and having placed one hand on top and one hand below the ball will now proceed as described in Fig. 5.16.

As he approaches the next back to receive the ball he will secure it in his top hand and raise the ball outward to hold it in the path of the oncoming back. He is instructed not to swing or throw it at the next ball carrier but simply to hold it up for him and let him take it.

Progression

We begin the drill by placing the two lines of backs about ten yards apart. The backs run at slow speed executing the handoff deliberately and being corrected when mistakes arise. The running speed is gradually increased with increased proficiency in the handoff and accepting the handoff until all backs are running at full speed.

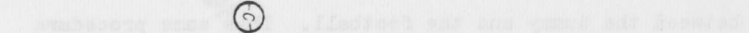
Alley Drill

Purpose: To practise balance, coordination and hitting ability while running with the football.

To deliver a flipper or straight arm while running with the football.

Execution of the Drill

To execute this drill with the proper technique the ball carrier must always keep his body between the dummy and the ball. To begin the drill the ball carrier assumes his proper stance, accepts a handoff with the proper technique from our QB and explodes into the first dummy. Heavy blocking dummies are used in this drill. Each one is held by a back who is instructed to lift the dummy from the ground and



delivering a blow with a flipper of the left arm and pivot away from the second dummy, once again keeping his body between the dummy and the football. This same procedure is repeated against the third, fourth and fifth dummies. After the fifth hit the ball carrier aligns himself at the opposite end of the drill. The men holding the dummies are replaced and the drill is repeated in the opposite direction.

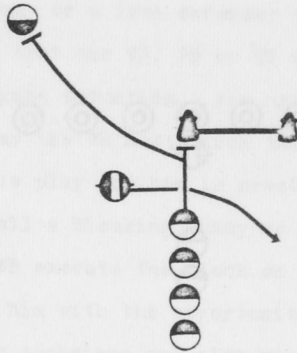
Handoff and Hit

Purpose: To practise agility, balance and coordination, in ball carrying.

To practise the maintenance of forward momentum after being hit while carrying the ball.

Execution of the Drill

For this drill we like to employ the Crowther 2-man sled. The fine recoil action from the sled adds extra pressure to the ballcarrier to maintain his balance emphasizing the necessary coordination and balance necessary to execute the proper technique in ball carrying. The backs align themselves as illustrated in Fig. 5.18, and begin with the proper stance. The back accepts the ball from the QB and hits the sled with his right shoulder as the alignment dictates in Fig. 5.18. After making contact with the sled he attempts to drive through it -- forcing it back a yard or two. He then pivots to the outside as quickly as possible maintaining his forward momentum. As he pivots away from



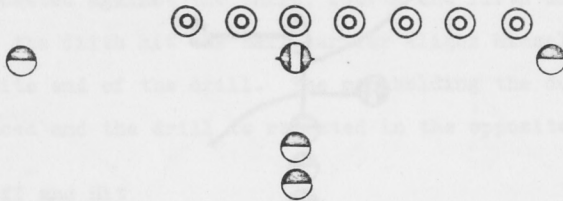
the sled another back holding an air dummy drives toward him in an attempt to knock him off his feet. Unless the ball carrier has maintained that forward momentum he will be an easy target for the air dummy. The man holding the air dummy is given only one attempt to knock him down. When the attempt is complete the drill is complete and the next ball carrier executes.

Offensive Execution and Timing Drills

Purpose: To practise the overall patterns, techniques and time of both our running and passing offense.
 To practise variations in our offensive sets.
 To practise adjustments in our offensive sets.

Execution of the Drill

This drill as described in Fig. 5.19 is used in a number of ways to practise both our running plays and pass



plays. Seven tires are positioned at distances approximating our offensive line. The backs align themselves according to the tire arrangement. If we wish to practise our pass offense the two tires representing the 2 and 8 men are simply eliminated and our 2 and 8 men inserted. When it is desirable or necessary a part of the force unit or a part of the contain unit may be employed to defend against particular offensive plays. We also employ this drill to practise our offense in total or particular parts of the offense against our opponents defense to acquaint our offensive players with the defensive alignment, reactions and pursuit of our opponents.

The drill may be further adapted to allow our flanker, HB, FB and WB to practise the blocking for the outside running plays. To practise this technique we simply install

a blocking dummy or a live defender to isolate the particular situation that our WB, FB or HB will be required to execute in a game situation. For example, to effectively run our 12 play the WB must block the corner linebacker. To isolate this play for him in practising the 10 series we would install a blocking dummy as the corner linebacker and have the WB execute the block on the corner linebacker. This provides him with the opportunity of practising his game situation technique and also gives the HB a more realistic situation to practise his execution of the 12 play. A non-active WB would be assigned the job of holding the dummy and the WB's would alternate between blocking and holding the dummy. The same situation exists with our FB and HB in the FB and HB sets respectively.

Progression

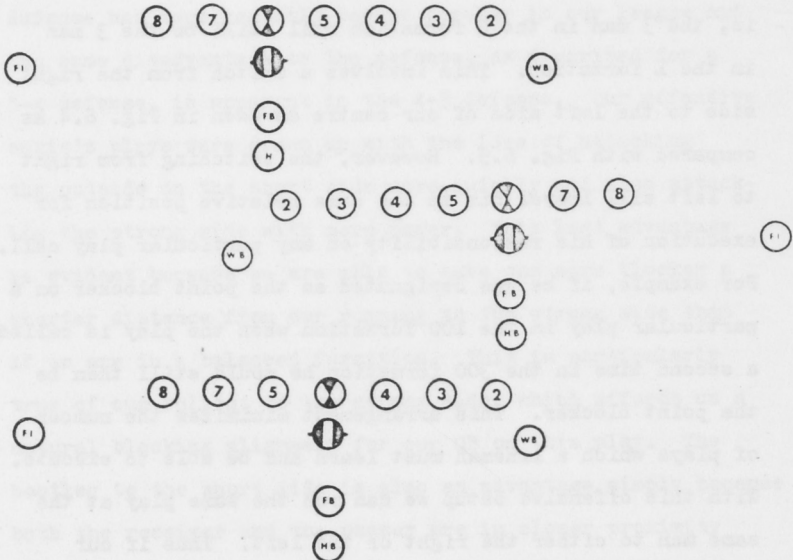
In introducing a new series of running plays we split our backfield into groups according to positions. A QB would execute the 10 series with a FB and HB. Another QB would execute the 10 series with the WB and flanker. The first group would practise only those techniques involved with the 114 and 112 plays. The second group would practise only those techniques involved with the 111 and 117 plays. The QBs would alternate between groups so that they would each work on all four of the 10 series plays. This procedure eliminates a lot of monotonous repetition that is usually

encountered in the early practises with recurring mistakes in timing and proper execution. As proficiency increased and at the coach's discretion the two groups would be combined so that a QB would then execute the entire 10 series.

CHAPTER 6

TEAM OFFENSE

Chapter 4 and 5 dealt with the alignment and techniques involved in offensive line and backfield play. We will now consider the total offense in terms of our running game and passing game. Our alignment as a team involves the backfield in the I arrangement described in Chapter 5 with the offensive line unbalanced either right (Fig. 6.1) or left (Fig. 6.2) or in a balanced formation (Fig. 6.3). Each



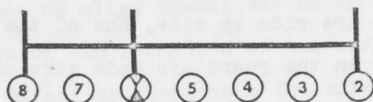
of the offensive plays run in series from any of the three formations are designed to complement a particular defensive adjustment to our offensive alignment. These variations in formations were selected for use to take advantage of the strengths offered by each formation and the flexibility they would add to complement the I formation of the backfield.

Our FB and HB align themselves in an I behind the 6 man regardless of the formation of the offensive line. In each of the offensive formations the offensive linemen retain their own number regardless of their position. That is, the 3 man in the R formation will still be the 3 man in the L formation. This involves a switch from the right side to the left side of our centre as seen in Fig. 6.4 as compared with Fig. 6.5. However, the switching from right to left still leaves him in the same relative position for execution of his responsibility on any particular play call. For example, if he was designated as the point blocker on a particular play in the 100 formation when the play is called a second time in the 300 formation he would still then be the point blocker. This arrangement minimizes the number of plays which a lineman must learn and be able to execute. With this offensive setup we can run the same play at the same man to either the right or the left. Thus if our blocking is stronger at a particular point of attack in the offensive line we can use this point of attack against

both the right side and the left side of the defense.

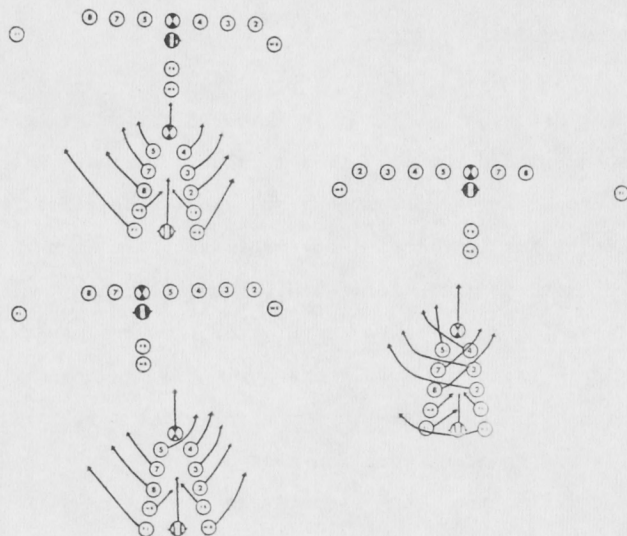
In our league the defenses which we oppose are trained for confronting a balanced line which is used by all other teams in the league. Thus, by presenting an unbalanced line we give the defense a handicap in that they must look for and find new offensive keys by which to react and pursue our offense. In particular the keys of the interior linebacker's are completely different in the unbalanced line since both guards are side by side, one of the interior linebacker's keys on the guard are made more difficult to read particularly from an Oklahoma 5-4 defense. The 4-3 defense has more recently become popular in our league and the same disadvantage to the defense, as described for a 5-4 defense, is apparent in the 4-3 defense. Our offensive serie's plays were drawn up with the idea of attacking the outside on the short side more quickly and also attacking the strong side with more power. This last advantage is evident because we are able to have one more blocker a shorter distance from our running to the strong side than if we are in a balanced formation. This is particularly true of our rollout to the strong side, which affords us a natural blocking alignment for our QB on this play. The bootleg to the short side is also an advantage simply because both the receiver and the passer are in closer proximity in a shorter period of time than would be possible had we used a balanced line. On the other hand the balanced line

affords us the best dropback blocking formation that we have in our offensive itinerary. The cup is more naturally formed from the 200 formation than either the 100 or the 300. As a means of identification and because we wish to instill our players with the difference between the sides of our offensive line we make the distinction of strong side



or short side in the unbalanced lines. Fig. 6.4 illustrates the strong versus the short side definition of our offensive line which is the same for both the 100 and the 300 formations. This distinction is not necessary, of course, in the balanced formation.

To facilitate play calls and to minimize the time in moving from the huddle to the line of scrimmage we employ the inverted V huddle. This huddle facilitates the movement of our players to the strong and short side effectively in spite of the complicated movements involved in switching from the R to the L formation. The placement of players in the huddle is as follows in Fig. 6.5. Our 6 man is always first to break the huddle and sprint toward the line of scrimmage. The other linemen simply take the shortest route to their formation position also at a sprint. The QB leads the backs to the line of scrimmage by jogging straight through the huddle and stopping immediately behind the 6 man. The FB follows in line behind the QB, the HB behind the FB, the flanker behind the HB until they reach their formation positions. The WB simply sprints to his slot or wingback alignment. Figs. 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8 show the deployment of the offense from the huddle to the line of scrimmage. As previously mentioned each of our offensive linemen is designated by number. However we also refer to our 2 man as a split end, our 8 man as a tight end, our 3 man as a strong side tackle, our 6 man as a center regardless of the formation and to our 4 and 5 men as offensive guards.



Each of our offensive series is numbered chronologically in order of presentation to the team. The 10 series is taught and practised first, the 20 series second, the 30 series third and so on. The first three series of plays that we employ are all running series plays basically. Each series however includes both a rollout that suits the flow

of the backfield in a running series and a bootleg which is executed in the direction opposite to the flow of the running series. Thus in the 10 series we may execute any of the running plays as well as the 10 bootleg or the 10 rollout. This is designed to take advantage of a defense that will react quickly to our running series, by faking the run and throwing the pass. Each series was designed to match the strengths of the various formations. That is, the 10 series is a slant to the strong side; the 20 series is a slant to the short side and the 30 series is a pitch to the short side. The 40 series is our draw and screen series and the 50 series designates our dropback series.

The play call is designated as follows:

Formation	= 100
Series	= 10
Point of attack	= <u>4</u>
Play call	= <u><u>114</u></u>

To this call the type of blocking which we wish to use is added after the three digit number. In our example this would be a 114 dive. If the QB wished to adjust the offensive set, he would announce this before the number call. An example of this would be a "flanker set 114 dive". Thus our flanker would align himself to the strong side instead of the short side and we would run the 114 dive play.

The back who is to carry the ball is not designated in the play call. However since each of our backs has a

particular assignment on each series which is designated by the point of attack he, knows that he will become the ball carrier only when his point of attack is designated by the play call.

If it is to our advantage because of a defensive alignment or because of the type of play we wish to run we may adjust the type of blocking at a given point of attack. We employ seven different types of blocking that may be used on any running play. For example, the 112 play may be run as a 112 trap, a 112 sweep, a 112 cross, a 112 power and 112 dive.

Each time a back is given the responsibility of carrying the ball he is concerned specifically with three types of blocks set up by our other offensive backs and our offensive linemen. The first of these is the primary block, which takes place at the point of attack. The back executes his responsibility by going directly to the point of attack unless we are running a counter play. His point of attack is an offensive lineman designated by the play call. As he approaches the point of attack he must be aware of the primary block, be it a man at the point of attack or a lineman pulling to block at the point of attack. He adjusts his running lane according to that block at the point of attack so that if the blocking on his particular play is a trap he must be aware of the pulling guard and adjust to his block as it is executed. After the initial adjustment

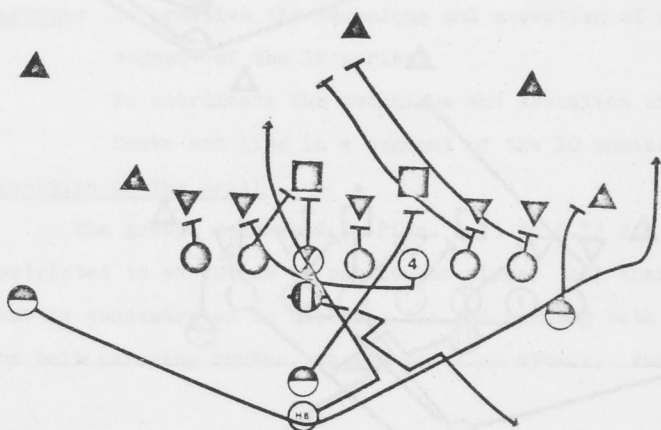
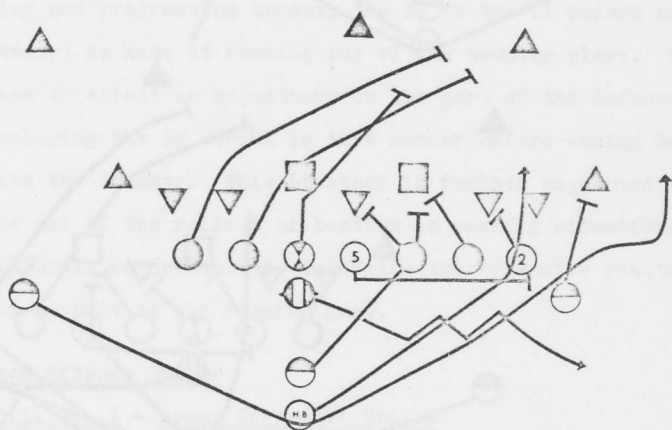
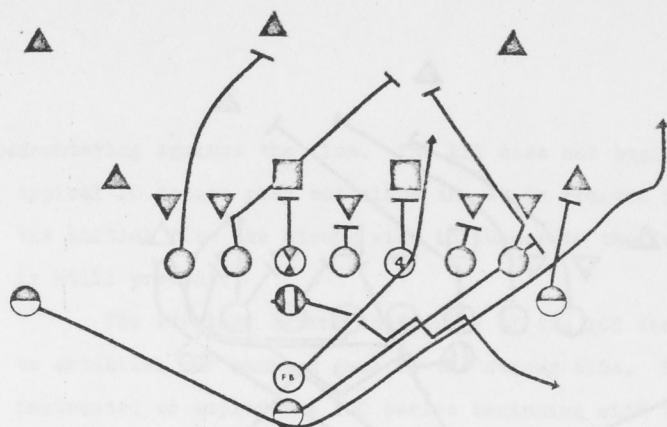
to the primary block the ball carrier must be aware of and adjust to the secondary block, which is defined as a block applied to a linebacker at the point of attack. Finally, the ball carrier must be aware of the downfield block and adjust to this block by our offside lineman who will be attacking the defensive contain unit.

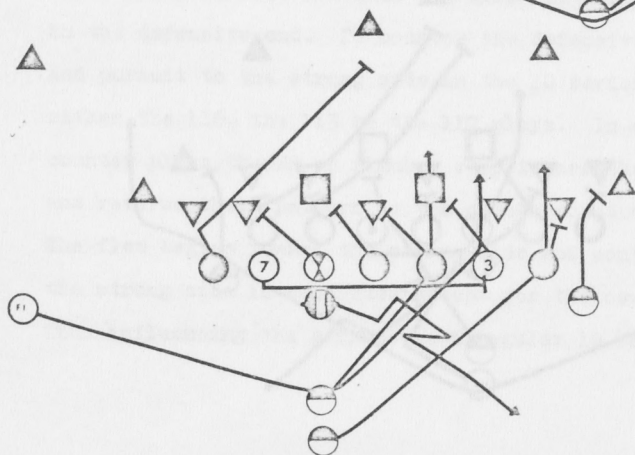
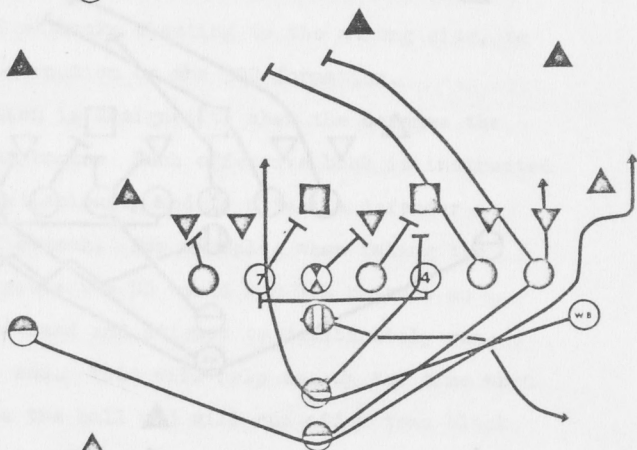
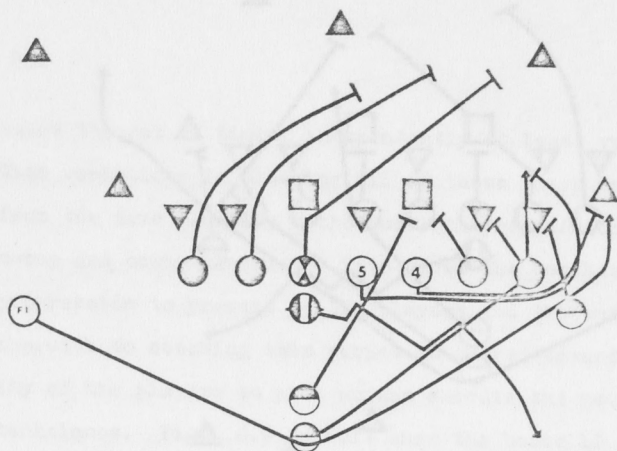
In running from each of the three situation blocks the ball carrier is instructed in the importance of running his lane precisely according to the blocking design. The closer he executes to the blocking design the greater will be his effectiveness in aiding the blocker to execute his particular responsibility.

The 10 series was designed as our first series. We believe it is very simple in execution, employing both straightforward explanation in terms of strategy and also having the flexibility that we can use to change or adjust for particular defenses. The only difficulty we have ever encountered with the 10 series is the 11 play, which requires some delicate timing between the QB and the flanker. Adjustments are often necessary in the speed of the flanker execution compared to the speed of the QB's execution. This is caused, of course, by the fact that the QB must execute two fakes previous to the flanker execution. However, the fact that each of the FB, HB and flanker backs simply take one step toward their basic running route and execute by sprinting the distance over that running route

makes the job of timing independently at least very simple. With variations in blocking all of these plays may be run from the dive blocking technique with progression to trap, sweep and power blocking. This gives the coaches a graded progression to present to the players and the entire approach to coaching this series is geared toward the ability of the players to pick up and execute the necessary techniques. Figs. 6.9 to 6.14 show the basic 10 series with the FB and HB setbacks slanting to the strong side, be it either the 100 formation or the 300 formation.

This execution is designed to show the defense the obvious flow of our backs. Each offensive back is instructed to run his route meticulously and to attack a defender at his basic point of attack. For example, when faking the ball at his basic route the HB would run his pattern as instructed and practised and attempt to deliberately run into the defensive end. This will help set up the time when he actually carries the ball and will run off a trap block on the defensive end. To counter the defensive reaction and pursuit to the strong side in the 10 series we employ either the 116, the 113 or the 117 plays. In each of these counter plays the HB or flanker step toward their basic route and reverse their pattern to the counterpoint of attack. The flow begins toward the strong side and continues toward the strong side in each case except for the counterback. Thus influencing the defense as a regular 10 series play but





countering against the flow. The 117 does not begin as a typical 10 series play but since the WB is removed from the initial flow the strong side influence to the defense is still present.

The strategy behind the design of the 100 series is to establish our running game to the strong side. The QB is instructed to employ the 100 series beginning with the 14 play and progressing through the 12 to the 11 before an attempt is made at running any of the counter plays. We hope to affect an adjustment on the part of the defense by employing the 10 series in this manner before coming back with the counter. This strategy is further augmented by the use of the rollout or bootleg in passing situations, but not until we are able to determine the defensive reaction and pursuit to the running game.

Team Offense Drills

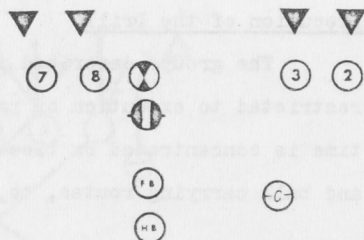
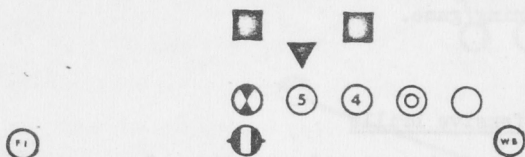
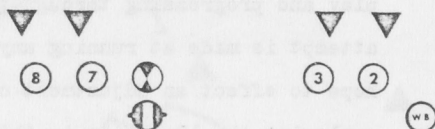
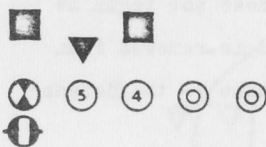
Drill No. 1 - Group Offensive Drills

Purpose: To practise the technique and execution of a segment of the 10 series.

To coordinate the technique and execution of the backs and line in a segment of the 10 series.

Execution of the Drill

The groups described in Figs. 6.15 to 6.18 are restricted to execution of particular plays. All their time is concentrated on blocking for and running both faking and ball carrying routes, to the point of attack. Variations



in blocking are used, such as dive, sweep, trap, power, with different running plays. The groups form a huddle, the QB calls the play and the play is simply executed under supervision of a coach. The blank spaces for players who are not in a group such as the 2 man in Fig. 6.15 are replaced by a tire to provide a landmark for the HB in running the 12 play. This same adjustment is made for each of the groups. This allows the coach and players to concentrate on a particular aspect of the 10 series or in fact any other series that we are introducing. It serves to define more vividly the finite timing involved in execution in terms of the backs and also in terms of the relationships between backs and the linemen with regard to blocking and arriving at the point of attack. In any one practise session, during one particular period, we will only employ the drills described as Figs. 6.15 and 6.16 or Figs. 6.17 and 6.18.

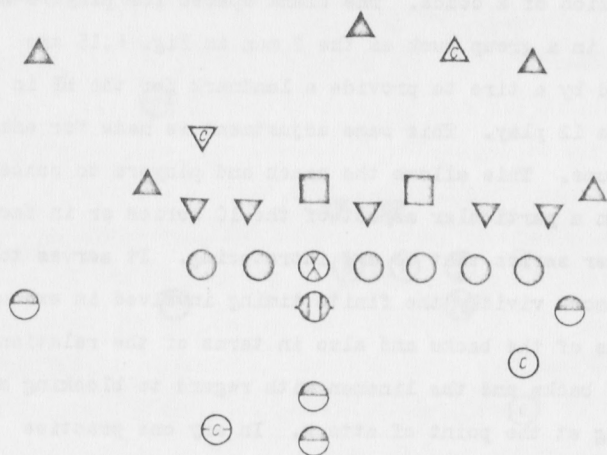
The progression of the drill begins with the line and backs running against blocking dummies or air dummies and progressing to live contact.

Drill No. 2 - Team Offensive Drills

Purpose: To practise the technique and execution involved in the 10 series.

To coordinate the timing and movements of all the offensive backs with the offensive linemen.

Execution of the Drill



The offense aligns in a huddle, the QB calls the play, breaks the huddle and the entire offense sprints to the line of scrimmage. The play is executed and each of the four coaches position throughout the offense and defense, as described in Fig. 6.19 and observes the execution employed by his unit at the point of attack primarily. Immediately after the play is run each coach will quickly evaluate the performance, point out either errors or strong points executed by his players before the next play is run. The entire defense, as well as the entire offense, is coached in this manner.

The drill is begun with the five interior linemen using heavy blocking dummies and the contain unit plus the

4 and 5 men using pushback air dummies. This allows for the offensive linemen to execute a block and hold it for instruction and evaluation purposes and also allows the contain unit plus the 4 and 5 men to react and pursue, thus showing their ability to execute their particular assignment. The drill varies in progression from eliminating the heavy dummies from our force unit and allowing them to make live contact and react and pursue with our contain unit still employing the pushback dummies. This step in progression allows the coaches to concentrate their coaching criticism to a particular segment of the team. Another variation of the drill employs the force unit once again holding a dummy while the contain unit is live. In this drill the contain unit will react, pursue and tackle and the offense will execute their assignment against the force unit dummies and also against the contain unit live. This serves to focus attention on our downfield blocking and our blocking at the point of attack, particularly with the outside plays and focussing the attention on the contain unit to maintain the defensive perimeter and the offense to circumvent the defensive perimeter. The final step in the progression is to eliminate all dummies and practise live offense versus live defense in full-scale scrimmage. At this point the coaches are still aligned in the same positions as for the dummy drills with the same jobs with respect to criticism of the execution of particular players on particular plays.

Pass Offense

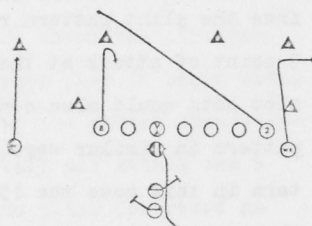
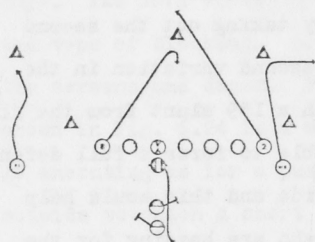
Our pass offense includes the dropback, rollout, bootleg and screen. The individual routes and overall patterns of attack are set up to take advantage of two general factors. These are:

- (1) The defensive set employed by other teams in the league.
- (2) Our offensive personnel.

A third factor which we considered in developing the passing attack was individual flexibility within the pattern to take advantage of particular defensive personnel and hence alter our pass routes accordingly. In view of these considerations the 2- and 8-man routes within each pattern is defined rigidly and the WB and flanker routes are left flexible. The QB or the coaches spotting a game may pass on information and adjust the basic route of the WB and flanker within any particular pattern. Thus we can set the 2- and 8-man routes to take advantage of a particular defensive set such as a 3-deep or a 4-deep with coverage either as a man to man or zone and still allow us flexibility to assign our WB and flanker backs to take advantage of particular individuals within a defense.

The 50 series is designated as the dropback pass series and the 40 series is our screen and draw series. The first number designates the dropback or screen and the last number designates the point of attack. A word is

added after the number call to designate the primary pass routes of the 2 and 8 men. For example, the 159 slant indicates the dropback pass with the FB and HB blocking and the 2 and 8 men slanting at the defensive safety closest to the 9 point of attack. The WB and flanker backs run clearing patterns. The WB in our 100 formation runs at the defensive 5 back and then angles to the sideline to take him away from our primary point of attack and our flanker runs an angle-out route at the defensive 2 back from the 100 formation in order to assist in clearing our primary zone. The routes of both the WB and the flanker assist in the pattern by flare control of the defensive halfbacks. Fig. 6.20 and Fig. 6.21 show the 159 slant versus a 3 deep and 4 deep defense.



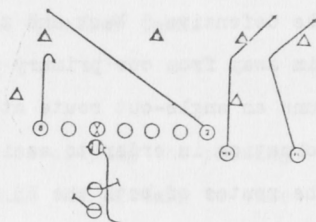
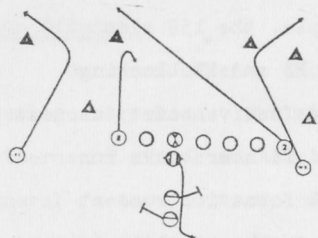
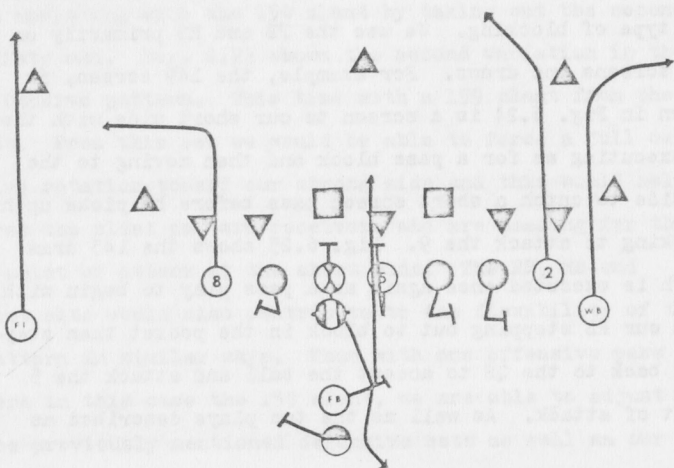
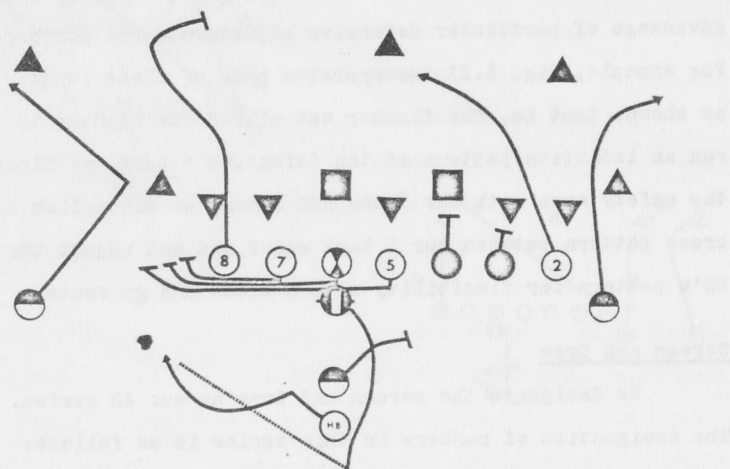


Fig. 6.22 shows the flexibility of the WB's pattern in assisting with the 159 slant by taking out the second safety man. Fig. 6.23 shows the second variation in the offensive pattern. This time with a 159 slant from the flanker set. From this set we would be able to force a full defensive rotation toward our strong side and this would help free the slant pattern receivers who are heading for the 9 point of attack at the short side. The FB, HB and slot sets would also contribute to the flexibility of the pattern in similar ways. Thus with one offensive pass pattern in this case the 159 slant, we are able to adjust for the previously mentioned defensive sets as well as our offensive personnel. In addition to the various sets and

the flexibility of individual patterns we are also able to incorporate isolation, flood and crossing patterns to take advantage of particular defensive adjustments and personnel. For example, Fig. 6.23 incorporates each of these ideas as shown, that is, the flanker set allows our flanker to run an isolation pattern at the defensive 5 back, we flood the safety area with our 8 man and 2 man, we accomplish a cross pattern between our 2 back and 2 man and adjust the WB's pattern for flexibility with a break and go route.

Screen and Draw

We designate the screen and draw as our 40 series. The designation of numbers in this series is as follows: the first number indicates the screen or draw, the second number indicates the point of attack at the line of scrimmage. The word screen or draw must be added to indicate the type of blocking. We use the FB and HB primarily on the screens and draws. For example, the 149 screen, as shown in Fig. 6.24 is a screen to our short side with the HB executing as for a pass block and then moving to the outside to catch a short screen pass before he picks up his blocking to attack the 9. Fig. 6.25 shows the 145 draw which is executed once again as a pass play to begin with, with our FB stepping out to block in the pocket then stepping back to the QB to accept the ball and attack the 5 point of attack. As well as the two plays described as



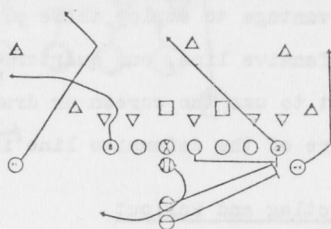
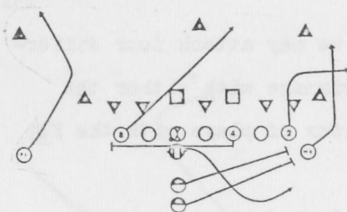
the 149 screen and the 145 draw we may attack four different points along the line of scrimmage with either the screen or the draw using variations of plays with the FB and HBs.

The screen and draw is not used unless properly set up by the 50 series. We have found it to our best advantage to employ these plays against the hard-rushing defensive line, our quarterback is instructed accordingly not to use the screen or draw unless he has felt the pressure of the defensive line in dropback situations.

Bootleg and Rollout

Each of our offensive running series is complemented by the rollout and bootleg. The rollout play is executed with the flow of the backfield (Fig. 6.26) whereas the bootleg is executed in the opposite direction of the flow (Fig. 6.27) This principle holds true regardless of whether the flow is to our strong side or short side. For example, in the 10 series the rollout is designated as the 112 rollout and the bootleg as the 118 bootleg, that is, in the rollout we are attacking at the 2 point of attack whereas in the bootleg we are attacking at the 8 point of attack.

The 112 rollout involves our interior linemen heading out as running play on their first step with our 4 man executing a reverse pull technique to block the on rushing defensive end from our short side. Our FB and HB execute by taking their basic running route and blocking at the



2 point of attack. Our passer fakes to our FB and aligns himself behind the backfield blockers. Our receivers are deployed to flood the flat and intermediate zone outside of the 2 point of attack. This is accomplished by having our 2 man break out at the 5 back and having our WB sprint to the flat zone. Our 8 man executes a shallow slant route in front of the defensive 1 back to position himself for the throwback pass. We do not designate a primary receiver on this pattern. Our QB is instructed simply to throw to the flooded zone and be conscious of the defensive adjustment for a clue to the likely receiver. If the opportunity to throw doesn't present itself the QB is instructed to run with the ball to the outside. If the quarterback does throw

the ball his responsibility is to continue to the outside in case of an interception where he will be in a position to make the tackle.

The primary receiver in the 118 bootleg is our 8 man. His execution is simply to bump the defensive end allowing the defensive contain unit to see the flow of the offensive backfield. The 8 man then takes a shallow flat pattern and sprints to the sideline. Our QB executes a reverse pivot away from the flow and sprints to the short side. The execution on the part of the QB is partly determined by the charge of the defensive end. If the defensive end is floating our QB will take a little more time before he throws the ball or in fact may choose to run with the ball. If the defensive end, however, is crushing he may be forced to manoeuvre the ball more quickly. In any case the 8 man is instructed as to these possibilities and to his roll in assisting the QB in executing the play. If the QB decides to throw the ball as in the rollout, he is instructed to cover the path of the ball by running to the outside in the case of an interception and making the tackle.

The previously mentioned factors and considerations for setting up our passing attack are incorporated into the dropback, screen, rollout and bootleg patterns to give us added advantages and to further complicate the defensive adjustments and responsibilities.

CHAPTER 7

THE FORCE UNIT

The force unit is the striking, active part of the total defense which attempts to coerce the offensive team to a desired action in order to stop the offensive play. Simply put, it is hitting before you get hit. The force unit attempts to dictate the type of ball that the offense must resort to. If we allocate defensive personnel in such a manner that we strengthen our middle line this forces the offense to other methods of gaining ground. We know now that we are stronger in the middle and perhaps the offense will run wide or pass the ball. If we can outplay them against their favorite method of attack, if we can force them to abandon planned methods of gaining ground, we can then prepare for expected manoeuvres.

The force unit is ruled by three specific objectives. These are:

1. Expose the football, strip the running play of its blocking and nullify any backfield fakes.
2. Rush the passer.
3. Delay the pass receivers at the line of scrimmage.

Reaction

Members of the force unit must learn to react quickly and effectively when confronted with various types of blocks. When we hear the phrase "don't think -- just do", this means react to the key or situation, do not try to second guess the offense after the blocking has been initiated. The blockers in a defensive lineman's immediate area will tell the defensive player the general area in which the ball will be carried by the way he blocks. This is when the defender must be able to react quickly to the type of block and destroy the offensive play. Consequently, we devote a great deal of practise time to learning and practising the types of blocks that we will encounter, the proper reaction to the block, and the speed to carry out the reaction.

In a statement, we could sum up the reaction to offensive blocks as follows: "Always fight pressure". In all running plays the offensive linemen attempt to open up a hole or clear a running lane for the ball carrier. To do this, they must block defenders away from the prescribed path of the ball carrier. The defensive player must feel this pressure and quickly react to fight the block.

Personnel Types

There are three categories of personnel within the forcing unit: Defensive linemen; defensive linebackers, and defensive ends.

Because defense is difficult to play, defensive personnel should be organized such that the same general duties apply to the different personnel in a variety of defensive formations. This will simplify responsibilities and thereby minimize the chance of error. Each of the three types of personnel on the force unit has physical characteristics and abilities which set him apart from the remaining members of the defensive squad.

Defensive linemen, guards and tackles, will be the biggest players on the team. These are the players that must be strong enough and big enough to stand their ground and execute an effective rush on the quarterback. Since most offenses run off tackle or up the middle on necessary short yardage or for the touchdown, we must have big strong men in these positions who can take the "bread and butter" plays of the offense and hold them to no gain. These players are also frequently subjected to more than one blocker and must be able to hold their ground against double team blocking. The majority of their work will be confined to a straight charge into the offensive backfield. The defensive linemen must be contact men, the puncher as opposed to the boxer.

Defensive ends must be mentally alert and responsible because of the range of sets and situations that confront them during a game. These players must possess greater lateral mobility and speed than the defensive linemen. One

could think of the lean, raw-boned, hard-nosed type of individual playing this position. Not only should the ends be able to crash and penetrate into the offensive backfield, but also they must possess speed in order to force any play that attempts to go wide of the end position. These individuals must be adroit in the use of the hand shiver. Since the ball carriers have more room to manoeuvre in the flat zones, the defensive ends cannot allow blockers to reach their torso. Ends must be free of any blockers or the ball carrier will be able to slip by at the moment the end becomes tied up with a blocker. Height is another asset for the defensive ends. Their view of the situation unfolding must remain unhampered. If the blockers loom large in the defensive end's view then he cannot see and concentrate his attentions on the ball carrier.

The inside linebackers are the utility men of the defense. They must be prepared to face many different types of attack and be in a position to tackle on nearly all plays. Requisites for linebackers include mobility, upper body strength and courage. He must not only be able to act as a lineman but also as a defensive backfielder for pass coverage. They must be able to survey the field situation, consider the strength and weakness of the offense and of their own defense, be sure tacklers, and be able to play any position on the defensive force unit. Since linebackers must cover positions on the front line, flat zones and in the pass zones,

they must possess the mobility, speed and aggressiveness necessary to get to the ball carrier no matter where he is running.

Defensive Adaptation to Personnel

We strive to take advantage of player personnel -- that is -- placing the right type of player into the appropriate position. Doing this dictates that the force unit take on a shape which is obvious considering the personnel. We must decide whether there are enough players who have the characteristics needed to do a job as linemen. If there are, then we may be able to adopt a five man front line with three linemen (two tackles and a middle guard) and two defensive ends as our basic defense. We first decide on what shape the defensive force unit will take in order to utilize the players abilities. Then some modifications are in order to better cope with the particular offensive styles of the opponent teams. These modifications may necessitate one or two force unit members learning different fundamentals that are relatively simple. We must strive, however, to keep the fundamentals for each man the same regardless of the alignment.

For example, if we shift from our basic 52 defense into a 62 defense no member of the force unit has to learn a new set of fundamentals in order to do his job.

Stance and Alignment

Primarily, we use the 3 point and quarter eagle stances. Our linemen adopt a 3 point stance and in some cases and situations will move into a 4 point stance. A good defensive stance is similar to that of a good offensive stance. Since teams on offense adopt a 3 point stance we believe it is simpler to teach the same stance to both offensive and defensive personnel. There are some basic differences, however, that we do incorporate into the defensive stance.

The linemen should spread their feet slightly wider than shoulder width in order to gain increased stability. The depth of the stance, distance from support hand to the foot position, also increases slightly, depending on the physique of the player. Since our defensive linemen do not pull out of the line as do the offensive guards and tackles, we adopt a stance which gives us increased charging power. The weight should be equally distributed on the feet so that the defensive man can step with either foot first. Enough weight should be placed on the support hand so that when it is lifted from the ground, the lineman would have to step forward.

The offensive linemen know the method of attack, the time of attack and where the attack will be, the defensive players can only guess. Since the defensive players are at a disadvantage we must attempt to limit the advantage the

offense has. We do this by increasing the stability of the defensive linemen, and by adjusting their stance so they can get off the ball a little quicker. The offensive linemen cannot modify their stance in this manner because of the variety of duties they have to perform, such as pulling out of the line to block, pass protection blocking and blocking down on another defender. Their stance must be a compromise to enable them to perform all of these jobs equally well, if they adjust their stance in order to better do a particular job, it may tip the defensive players as to the type of play they are going to run.

Defensively, it stands to reason that we must increase the width of the stance to gain stability since we do not know where the blockers will be coming from. Our charge must take us forward everytime the ball is snapped so we adjust the stance in depth to increase performance. The bend of the knees for a defensive stance could also be increased slightly in order to lower the centre of gravity and further increase stability as well as prevent over exposure of the torso. The head, eyes, back and non-supporting hand may take a position as in the offensive stance.

If time permits or a coach has the personnel he could have the players on the right side of the defensive line assume a stance such that their right foot is back; linemen on the left side should drop their left foot back. Coming from this stance, at contact, the players would be in better

position to fight the offensive player. In fact their method of fighting trap men would be like the end technique. That is, outside foot back and take the blow of the trapper on the forward, inside leg and counter his blow with a near arm shiver.

The quarter eagle stance allows for the maximum mobility required by our linebackers. A linebacker in assuming his stance, should spread his feet the approximate width of his shoulders with a toe to toe placement. The heels and toes are in a straight line facing the offensive player; the heels should be very slightly held off the ground. The knees are flexed and the body bent slightly at the waist. The arms should hang straight down from the shoulders with a slight bend at the elbows. The head, shoulders and body should be squared to the offensive man, and the line of vision parallel to the ground to enable the linebacker to see his keys.

The first reaction of the linebacker, on the snap of the ball, will be to step with his inside foot toward his offensive lineman. If the blocker is to attack the linebacker and not pull out or drop back, then the backer must bring his outside leg up to his inside leg and beat the blocker and make the tackle. On all plays, the first reaction of the linebacker will be to step with his inside foot. When the key or play is obvious to the linebacker he then properly reacts to prevent the gain.

If we have only one inside linebacker in our secondary he does not step with either foot as the initial reaction. He simply reacts according to the key or the play.

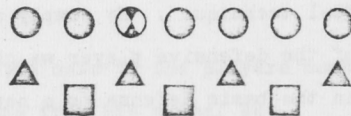
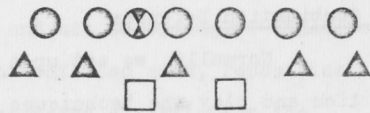
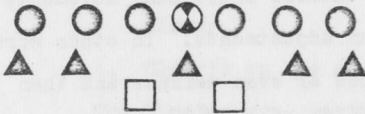
Our defensive ends will play either from a 3 point or from a quarter eagle stance depending upon the offensive formation. The quarter eagle stance they adopt however, is slightly different from that of the inside linebackers in that they must always have their outside foot back. They must be in their stance and arrive at position with their outside foot back. This allows for more effective wide coverage.

Depending upon the defensive formation, some of our linemen may assume a 4 point stance. This stance would greatly increase their stability and conversely limit their lateral mobility. There is very little difference between the 3 point and 4 point stance in terms of foot placement. The feet may be positioned slightly greater in depth and width than in the 3 point stance. Both hands are in contact with the ground slightly ahead of the shoulders and in line with the inner thigh of the respective legs.

Odd and Even Defenses

Defenses are referred to as either odd or even, depending upon the number of players on the front line of the force unit. Any defensive team will have no less than four, nor any more than eight players positioned on the front line. Therefore, the odd defenses have five or seven players in the force unit on the line of scrimmage; the even defenses

have four, six or eight players situated on the line of scrimmage as members of the force unit. An odd defense has a defensive player head up at the center of the offensive line, over the offensive center in a balanced line. An even defensive alignment does not have a defensive man over the center of the offensive line, but has two linemen, on the line of scrimmage, over the offensive guards.



Any fundamentally sound defensive formation will comply with the above statements concerning player positions in odd and even defenses. However, we could adopt an odd defensive formation and yet have no player over the center of the offensive line. This of course means we're gambling on what we expect the offense to run. We overload our forces to the suspected attack area leaving other parts of the defense more vulnerable to a successful attack. The shifting of players in this manner entails individual movements however, rather than whole team adjustments. In other words, we assume a normal or basic, odd or even defense and then have individual or paired repositioning.

Combination Defenses

Normally, we set up a basic, straight defensive formation and play the techniques and reactions according to the positioning of the players in that particular defense. We can, however, use some combinations of basic defenses together with modifications of these defenses.

These modifications simply reposition or shift one or more defensive players into different alignments, and consequently provides them with different assignments or techniques to carry out. To do this, we use what we call a "0-1 technique". By simply adding a "0" or "1" to the number of the defensive player we can shift him from his normal set in the basic defense to a new position. Adding a "0" to the players number will shift him toward the center of the line

one position. The digit "1" added to the players number will cause him to move one position away from the center of the line and from his normal set.

There are four positions concerned in the O-1 technique. These positions are:

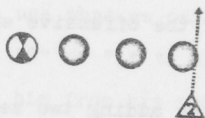
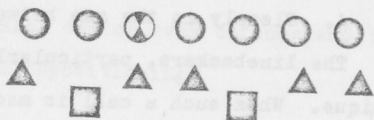
1. Head up to the inside shoulder of the offensive player.
2. Head up to the offensive player.
3. Head up to the outside shoulder of the offensive player.
4. Clearly in the gap between the offensive players.

The linebackers, particularly the 5 man calls the O-1 technique. When such a call is made, all linebackers must be aware of the repositioning and act accordingly. That is, fill the weak areas, add to the enforced area, reposition other defensive linemen to compensate slightly for the increased vulnerability of an area, or stay put and be ready to aid the weakened area.

For example, call 30 would move our right tackle, the 3 man, from a set head up the outside shoulder of the offensive man to a new set, head up the offensive man. Call 81 would position our 8 man, the left defensive end, clearly free of the offensive end, or in the gap off the offensive end.

By adding two zeros or two ones to the players numbers, we can move a player 2 positions from his normal set.

Some examples of defenses in terms of combinations and/or O-1 techniques include:



Only the defensive formation, the normal set and the team stunt is called in the huddle. The individual or pairs stunts and/or the O-1 techniques may or may not be called in the huddle, but on the line of scrimmage just before the offensive team is ready to put the ball into play.

To sum up our defensive combinations we could have:

1. Normal defensive sets -- Fig. 7.1.
2. Combination sets -- Fig. 7.6.
3. Normal sets with individual, paired, or team stunts and/or O-1 techniques -- Fig. 7.8.
4. Combination sets with individual, paired, or team stunts and/or O-1 techniques -- Fig. 7.9.

Position Techniques

Ends (2 and 8 man techniques)

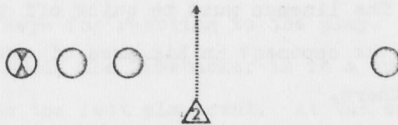
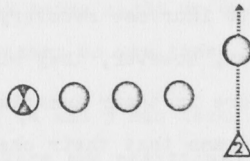
Confronted with a normal set, offensive ends in tight, the defensive end would line up in a 3 point stance head up the outside shoulder of the offensive end. The outside foot is back when he is in any stance and should remain there during contact work.

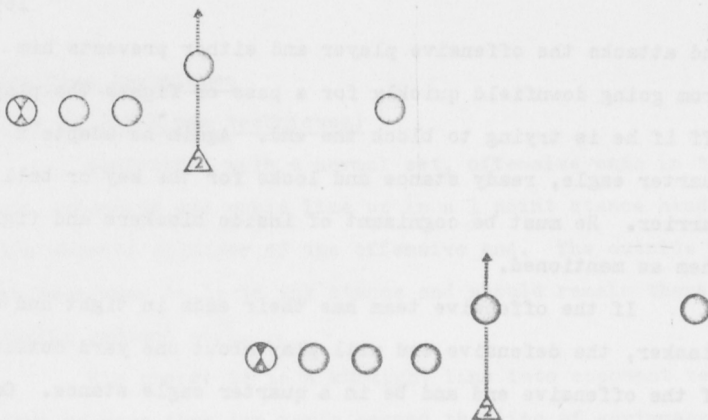
His charge is in a straight line into opponent territory no more than two yards beyond the line of scrimmage. He must position himself such that his shoulders remain parallel to the line of scrimmage and his outside leg is back. He must be in a quarter eagle stance ready to react to the unfolding key. If an attack comes from the inside (a trap blocker) he must not square off to the blocker but remain parallel to the line of scrimmage and take on the blocker with a near arm flipper. As long as his outside leg remains free he can always react and move to the outside to force and tackle the ball carrier. If he did square off to the blocker, (shoulder perpendicular to the scrimmage line) he may get tied up in the block or he probably would not be able to recover in time to pursue the ball carrier because his back would be to the ball.

If a wingback or slotback are in the offensive formation, our defensive ends line head up the offensive player (wingback or slotback) in a quarter eagle stance. The outside foot is back. On the snap of the ball, the defensive

end attacks the offensive player and either prevents him from going downfield quickly for a pass or fights the player off if he is trying to block the end. Again he adopts a quarter eagle, ready stance and looks for the key or ball carrier. He must be cognizant of inside blockers and fight them as mentioned.

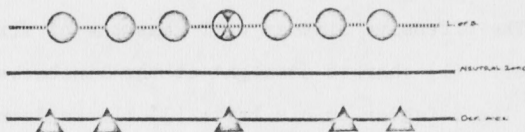
If the offensive team has their ends in tight and one flanker, the defensive end will play about one yard outside of the offensive end and be in a quarter eagle stance. On the snap of the ball he will move across the line of scrimmage and again take the proper position. This situation allows the flanker to come back and block the end, or the inside trapper to come across for the defensive end on running plays.





Defensive Linemen (3, 7 and 6 man techniques)

The defensive linemen assume a 3 point stance and can play anywhere from offensive end to end. Their technique is similar to that of the 2 and 8 men in that they also keep the outside leg back to increase recovery to the ball after contact. In most cases, however, they will be restricted to fighting players who are in their immediate area and not trap blockers. This means that their charge must be more solid. The 3 and 7 men attack their opponents with a near arm shiver. They must attempt to drive their men back across the line of scrimmage and control the area especially to their outside. The linemen must be quick off the ball -- they must fight the opponent in his area of combat and control the fight there.



Since the off-tackle play is a bread and butter play for many teams, the tackle must be tough and effective with his drive into the offensive area. We like the linemen to use a forearm shiver the majority of the time because in his position he frequently encounters double team blocking, trap blocking and cross blocking. If he uses the hand shiver consistently he will be exposing his torso to these different types of blocks and being right up on the line, he would not have the time necessary to see these blocks developing.

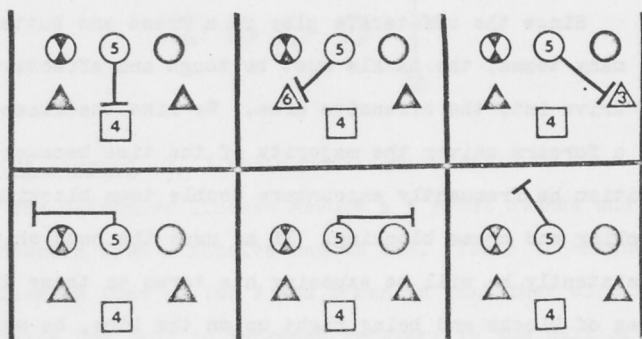
Inside Linebackers (4 and 5 man techniques)

The linebackers are positioned in a quarter eagle stance usually in front of an offensive player and about one and one half yards away from him. In most instances the linebackers will be opposite the offensive guards and will use them as keys for reacting to the play.

As stated, the linebacker is in a quarter eagle stance with a toe to toe foot placement. At the snap of the ball his first reaction is to step forward with his inside foot, from this position he reacts to the offensive lineman's

movements. This offensive movement will indicate to the linebacker the direction and type of play.

The offensive lineman will make one of six basic moves. He either: (1) charges straight at the linebacker; (2) blocks down to the defender on his left; (3) blocks down to the defender on his right; (4) pulls left; (5) pulls right; or (6) drops back for pass or play pass protection.



The linebackers must learn these keys, practise them, and be able to react quickly and effectively when they occur.

As was described previously, the linebacker always takes his initial forward step -- now he is ready to react and play the game.

The linebacker reacts to each key as follows: If the lineman charges him as in our dive play, he must move in and fight the offensive player. His rear leg (the outside leg) is brought up to the inside leg, shoulder width apart. The linebacker can use either the hand shiver or the forearm

shiver depending upon his effectiveness and physique. Usually a taller player would be advised to use the forearm shiver because it may be difficult for him to get low enough to deliver a blow with strength using the hand shiver. If the tall man misses or cannot control the charge with the hand shiver, the opponent will quickly penetrate to his torso. An offensive blocker wants to get into a defender's number and work from there, if he slips past the hand shiver he probably will take the defender out of the play. A shorter man will probably be more effective using the hand shiver because he will be low enough to use his hands forcefully and yet not be high enough so as to expose his body to the block. An effective and properly executed hand shiver, however, will allow the defensive player more freedom of movement. To use the hand shiver effectively, both feet must be on the ground and even with one another. That is the reason for using the particular quarter eagle stance, toe-to-toe stance for our linebackers. As the feet are brought even with each other, the body should be extended forward slightly and the hands and arms driven forward with a sharp, striking motion. The heels of the hand should be shot just under the shoulders of the offensive man. The hands must be driven upward so that the blocker is not only jarred still but also raised up slightly. By doing this, we attempt to place the defensive player's center of gravity lower than that of the blocker and it should be easier for him to steer

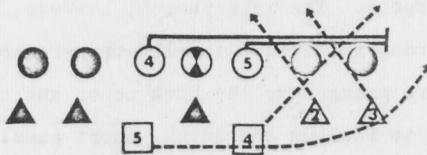
the blocker away from his body. The defender's hands are also used to push himself away from the offensive player and thereby aid himself in getting to the ball.

The action used in the forearm shiver is similar to that of the hand shiver, except that the blow is delivered with only one arm (the inside arm) rather than two hands. Again the lineman's feet move as they did for the hand shiver. The arm is bent at the elbow at the moment of contact. To gain striking and lifting power, we drive the forearm up from its lowered position in the quarter eagle stance and into the blocker's lower chest area. The heel of the opposite hand should drive underneath the opponent's shoulder. These arm and hand actions, as well as an extending of the body during contact, should raise and push the offensive blocker away from the defender. The defensive player can aid his lateral mobility by using the hand to push himself (and the opponent) away and free of the blocker.

If the offensive lineman blocks down to his right or left, the linebacker must step quickly, off the butt of the blocker, and into the gap with his body squared to the left or right, facing down the line of scrimmage. The linebacker must be in fundamental hitting position, low and ready to take on the other offensive player.

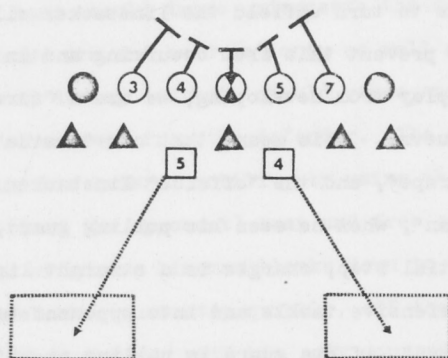
If the blocker pulls to his right or to his left, the linebacker must follow him, but on his own side of the line of scrimmage. After the initial step, the linebacker uses

the leg farthest away from the direction of the play in order to push himself away and to the play. When a linebacker is moving with a pulling guard, he should remain about a half yard behind him, never run parallel to the pulling guard. If the linebacker reaches the point of decision (when the offensive blockers execute the block or turn upfield) at the same time or before the puller, he will find that he has overshot the play. He will easily be blocked out of the play or the ball carrier will simply cut in behind him. The linebacker must turn up into the offensive lineman. When the blocker begins to turn upfield the linebacker will turn to meet him. To prevent this from occurring and in hopes of stopping the play from developing, we use a "scrape and shuffle" manoeuvre. This means that our "onside" linebacker is called "scrape", and the "offside" linebacker is "shuffle". The "scrape-man", when he sees his pulling guard, immediately after the initial step, charges in a straight line, off the butt of the defensive tackle and into opponent territory. The "shuffle-man", if his guard is pulling or if he spots



the direction of the ball, moves laterally behind the line of scrimmage and turns up to fight or tackle at the point of decisions.

If the offensive player drops back for pass protection, our linebackers also drop back and cover the hook zones. These zones are 10 to 12 yards deep of the line of scrimmage and straight out from the offensive ends. Therefore, the linebackers must drive off the outside foot and run back (not backwards), keeping their eye on the quarterback, and out at a 45° angle into the hook zone.



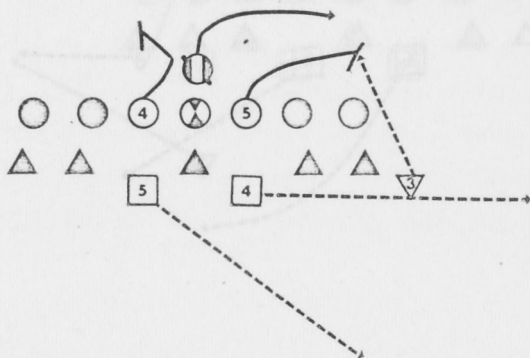
We do not have our players run backwards because they may stumble in this manouevre, also it lessens considerably their rate of speed. The main reason, however, for not running backwards, is because the linebackers lose sight of the receivers going into the hook zones and cannot react quickly enough to foul up the quick, short pass. Nor can they recover quickly enough from running backwards to prevent

the run if the pass is caught. Conversely, the reasons for having the linebackers run in the direction of the hook zone with their eyes on the quarterback are: (1) more speed and therefore time to get to the hook zone and to set up for pass coverage; (2) by running in the direction of the hook zone; the player cannot only watch the quarterback, but with peripheral vision, keep an eye on the potential receiver; (3) no recovery time is wasted when the player is already running in that direction, and finally, (4) there is less danger of stumbling and of not going to the proper zone.

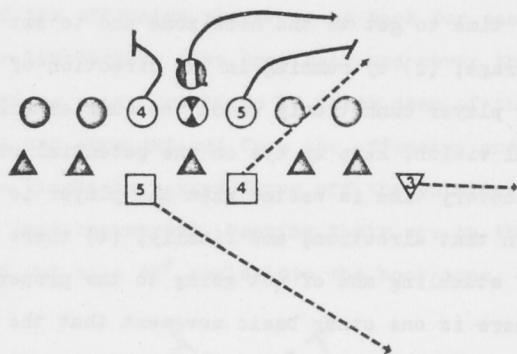
There is one other basic movement that the offensive lineman is more frequently executing. That is the play pass action. In this situation, the offensive man not only performs pass blocking action but also pulls out of the offensive line.

We will cover this manœuvre in a variety of ways, depending upon our defensive personnel.

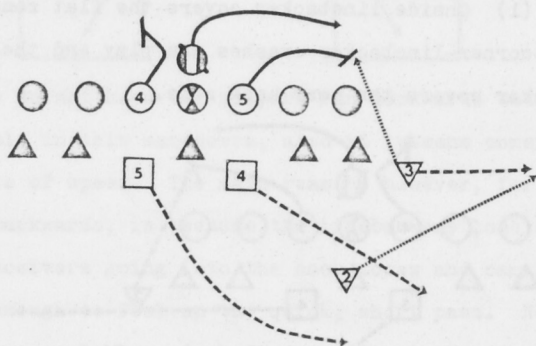
(1) Onside linebacker covers the flat zone, while the onside corner-linebacker crashes the play and the offside linebacker covers the near hook zone.



(2) Onside linebacker crashes the play, while onside cornerback covers this flat zone and offside linebacker covers up the onside hook zone.



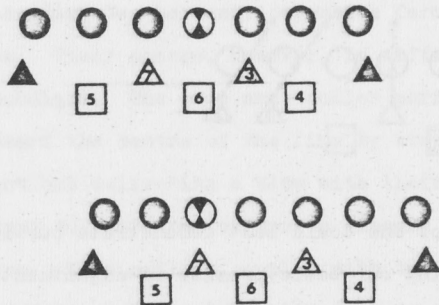
(3) Both linebackers cheating to the onside with the corner linebacker covering flat zone or crashing. If he crashes, the 2B, or right defensive half will cover his flat area.



To sum up, the inside linebacker's "mirror" the movements of the offensive lineman. Since the linebacker is at a disadvantage in terms of moment of attack, he must practise his reactions until he can do them instinctively and flawlessly; a false step or wrong step can delay the backer in doing his job and result in easy gains for the offensive team.

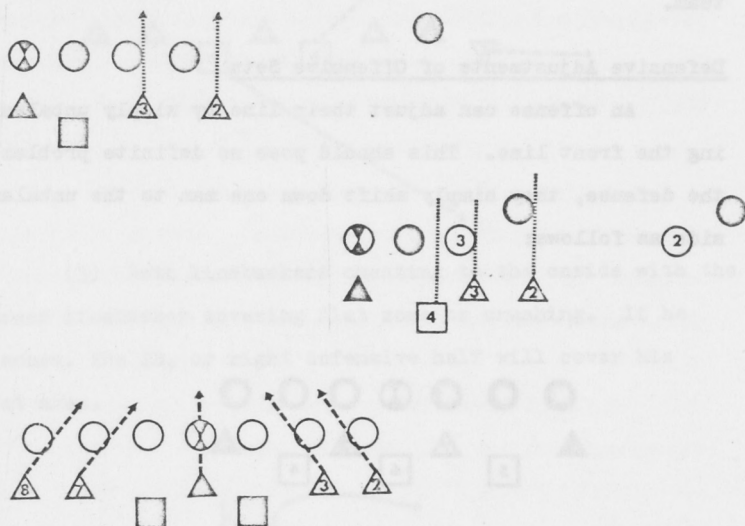
Defensive Adjustments of Offensive Sets

An offense can adjust their line by simply unbalancing the front line. This should pose no definite problem to the defense, they simply shift down one man to the unbalanced side as follows:



The offensive sets that present different assignments and alignments for our defense involve the moving of offensive backfield personnel and offensive ends to various positions.

Some example adjustments in terms of force unit members are as follows:



Perhaps one could best demonstrate our idea of adapting, by stating our basic premise of adjustments. Simply put, we want our defensive ends to have freedom of view and mobility if any offensive player flanks his normal position, therefore, we allow him to move out slightly and in a quarter eagle stance. If there is no one flanking the normal

position of the defensive end, our 2 and 8 men assume a 3 point, charging stance.

Our linebackers also compensate slightly for the offensive sets by "cheating" their positions somewhat and/or calling appropriate defenses.

One could reason that certain offensive adjustments are designed for particular offensive plays and styles of attack. We strive to maintain freedom of view and freedom of movement when confronted with these different offensive sets. As well, these sets should easily tell the defense something about the probable type of play, so we tend to adjust or "cheat" to these sets.

If a team runs powerfully from end to end we adopt a slightly different defensive charge in order to cope with this brand of ball. Our defensive personnel position themselves according to the basic defensive formation called in the huddle. Their charge, however, is different from the normal technique. The ends and tackles perform a "pinching" action toward the centre of the line by stepping with their inside foot and delivering a blow with their near forearm. They attempt to drive the offensive linemen into the centre of the line. This action, coupled with the number of offensive and defensive linemen should serve to plug up the area from defensive 2 man to 8 man. The defensive 2 and 8 men must be made aware of increased, outside responsibility caused by this manoeuvre. Since the ends attack is with

the inside forearm shiver, he can use his opponent to push away and gain speed in order to cover the wide running.

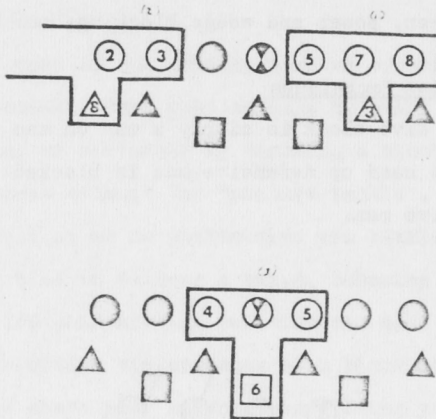
Situation Techniques

Keys and Angle of Pursuit

Each member of the defensive squad is given "tip-offs" or keys by which they can determine the type of play to expect and therefore, their responsibilities. The linebacker keys were described on page 172. Generally, linebackers will determine plays by the offensive man they are lined up against, usually the guards. In certain sets and against some teams, he may be able to key some member of the backfield. The first and immediate key for any member of the force unit is the offensive man he is playing opposite to. The 2 and 8 men must learn to key through their opponent linemen to the backfield personnel.

Let us first discuss the offensive linemen, and the general types of blocks they could perform that could tell the defensive players where the ball is going, and what type of play to expect. Each defensive lineman should be shown and practised in every situation that could confront him in a game. These situations must be practised until the player can react and perform properly and instinctively, without thinking. He has thought it all out before. He knows what to expect from each situation. He knows why the offense is blocking that particular way. All his efforts can now be concentrated on stopping the ball carrier. This

means that the coach should isolate each player and his immediate area.

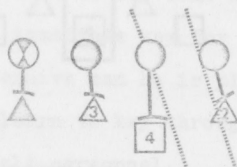


Note that the area concerning any member of the force unit is in the shape of a "T". The 2 and 8 men areas are open -- they are responsible for anything going wide. Any defensive player can be blocked by players out of his immediate area, but since the defender can see the players in his area, he will know whether or not to expect a block from elsewhere. Obviously, if no player in his viewing area blocks him, someone else definitely will. If he is blocked by one of the players in his area, in a particular manner, he should react to the play and to the ball.

There are ten general types of blocking that the defensive force unit must be made aware of. These types of blocking are what we call; dive, trap, pass, sweep, pitch, cross, screen, power and wedge blocking.

Dive Reaction Techniques

The dive block is simply a man on man blocking setup. The nearest head up defensive man is blocked by the particular offensive man.



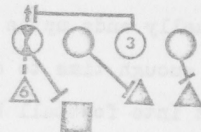
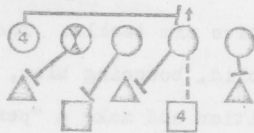
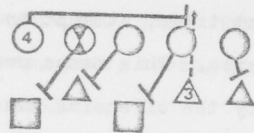
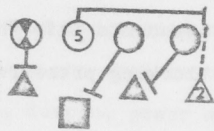
The offensive players attempt to drive their respective men away from the running area. If the defensive player finds himself hit hard by the man he is facing he should immediately fight the pressure. He must expect the ball to come, if not directly over him, then in his immediate area. He must use the forearm or hand shiver to get rid of his blocker, get into good hitting position, and look for a

runner -- any runner -- tackle him. Defensive players must, at times, attempt to drive their opponents into the running area. This means overtopping the blocking pressure applied by the offensive man.

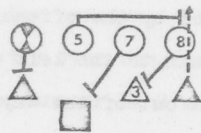
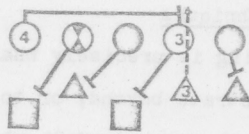
Linemen do not usually have an opportunity to make a clear tackle. They must attempt to stall the ball carrier at the line of scrimmage by throwing a block at him. Too often linemen attempt the "picture tackle". This attempt usually ends up as an ineffective arm tackle. There rarely is enough time to deliver a solid, bouncing blow, recover, get into football hitting position and make a "perfect" tackle. Fighting the pressure of a block means simply, getting to where your opponent is driving you from. If you have to drive your opponent into that area -- do it. If you can nullify his block and lose his contact, you could probably make the free tackle.

Trap Reaction Techniques

Trap blocking is precisely what it implies. A defender is allowed to penetrate beyond, or to the line of scrimmage and then the trap is sprung and the boom is lowered, unless the defender "keys" the trap. Any player on the force unit can be trapped, especially the 2 and 8 men. If the defensive player is to be trapped by the offensive team, his offensive opponent will block down to the left or to the right. The offensive man must get out of the way in order that the

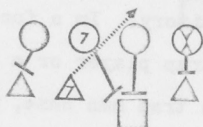


defensive man may be trapped, also he must take out another defender because the trapper is leaving his man.



We handled this situation in two different ways. If the offensive man blocked down, the defensive player would step, in a straight line and with his outside foot back, into offensive territory. In a football hitting position, he would expect a trap player or a short block from the other side. If the trap man came, he would be handled in the manner described previously. If, however, the short block came, he must fight the pressure and go to the ball area. When a trap block is imminent, it should be obvious that the offensive running area will be just inside the trap block. On a short block situation, the ball carrier will be just outside of the short block (see Fig. 7.31). The offensive players are "telling" the force unit players where the ball is going by their blocking action. Watching the backfielders in motion may cause confusion and doubt -- often the force unit cannot see the ball soon enough so we train our players to react to pressure and keys by his opponent.

The other method we employ in defending the short block and/or trap play, requires a slightly different charge on the part of the defensive linemen. The defensive charge is carried toward the short block man with the inside, forearm shiver. This results in a "pinching-down" action, toward the center of the line. Usually, if there is a pulling lineman, he will not be able to locate and block the defender because all the linemen are plugged into the middle of the line. No one is beyond the line of scrimmage. The ball



carrier will find it difficult to find running room inside his offensive ends. He must change course and sweep around the ends, hopefully, our 2 or 8 men are there waiting for him.

Rushing the Passer Technique

Pass blocking means only one thing to the defensive linemen -- rush the passer. To the linebackers it means covering the hook zones. The job required for the defensive ends will vary according to the type of defense a team is running. Our 2 and 8 men also join in the rush for the quarterback. The linemen and ends must force the passer to release the ball quickly, before his receivers get started into their patterns or before he can set up to throw the ball.

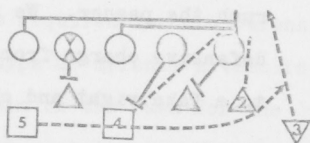
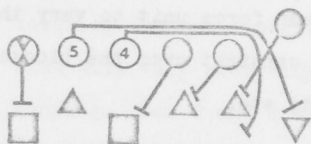
In pass blocking, the offensive linemen will demonstrate one of two things; they will either drop back a few paces directly from their stance to form a protective pocket, or they will step out and deliver one blow to the defender and then step back to form a pocket. Our force unit is instructed to observe clues that would lead to determining whether the play would be a pass. That is, does the blocker adjust his stance, tip back on his heels or less weight on the down hand so that he will be able to get back faster.

The offensive lineman attempts to hit, recover and hit again. This is how he protects the passer. He allows the defensive player to come to him and then he delivers the block and recovers to wait again. Defensively, a player must not allow himself to be "bounced off". The blocker must have no time to recover and set himself for another block. If the defender can keep the pressure constant; if he can maintain contact with the blocker, then there is a good chance of being able to push the blocker aside and continue to rush the passer. We instruct our force unit to vary the defensive charge from a charge straight over the blocker, to a fake right and charge left, etc.

Sweep Reaction and Pursuit Techniques

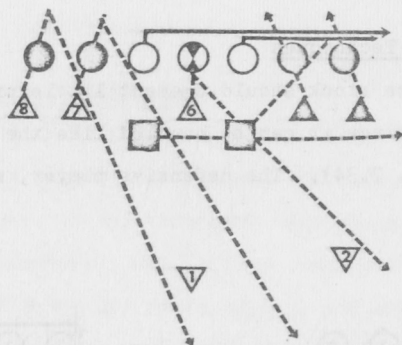
Generally, sweep action is indicated by one or two pulling linemen followed closely by a running back. In order to do this, the offense must establish a running lane outside of our defensive end. Defensively, we must be in their

running lane and tackle the ball carrier. Generally, the blocking will take the form as shown in Fig. 7.31. This being the case, the 2 man, realizing his offensive end is performing a short block, will prepare for the inside trap or another short trap from the outside. He must fight the pressure of the outside short block. He must not allow the offensive pullers and the ball carrier to sweep around and outside of him. Every effort must be made to stop the play from turning the corner or to force the ball inside of his position. If he can turn the play inside, the pursuit of the remaining members of the force unit will stop the play. One could think of the force unit attempting to "sandwich" or squeeze the ball carrier. The linemen should attempt to break through, beyond the line of scrimmage, and catch the play or nullify the pulling guards. This should leave the



ball carrier without protection when he starts to turn up-field. If this is not done, then the linemen must turn and assume a proper angle of pursuit to the ball.

Angle of pursuit simply means, running the proper route to put the tackler in front of the ball carrier at the earliest possible moment.



The angle of pursuit for the 6 man is approximately through the position of the defensive 2 back. The defensive 7 and 8 men take an angle approximately through the position of the defensive 1 back. This angle of pursuit is executed only after the defensive linemen have protected or secured their own area.

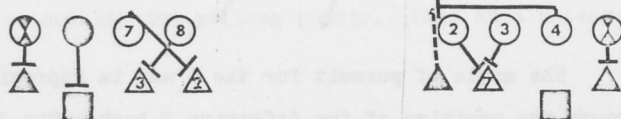
Pitch Reaction Techniques

A pitch manouevre is typified by the quarterback quickly turning and tossing the ball to a moving backfielder. An offensive tackle generally pulls out of the line and leads

the interference for the ball carrier. When our 3 or 7 men are confronted with this procedure they immediately turn and sprint to the outside. This will involve fighting his way past the offensive end and however he must not move into the backfield or when the ballcarrier turns toward the line of scrimmage the defense tackle will find himself chasing the play.

Cross Reaction Techniques

The cross block should present little problem to the defensive man since it can be handled like the short block situation (Fig. 7.34). The defensive player, seeing the



short block by his opponent, will step forward and be ready for an offensive player from the direction of the short block or from the opposite direction (another short block). In other words, as was mentioned previously, if a short block

occurs one can expect a trapper from the direction of the short block or another short block from the opposite side. The cross block is exactly the same principle as the trap play, and is therefore treated the same defensively.

If the force unit had called for a pinching charge, in this situation it is unlikely that the cross block would be effective since the second blocking man would not be over to hit the defender.

Power Reaction Techniques

The power block is a double team block. Two offensive players attempting to block one defensive player. The basic premise for the defensive ball player is simply to fight the pressure. The defender must feel the pressure of the power blocker and react quickly and effectively to this power. The reaction to a power block can be carried out in two ways.

The defensive player, upon feeling the pressure from the power blocker, spins or pivots away from the pressure and turns back into the path or area of the ball. When the player does execute this sprint out manouevre he must drop his centre of gravity. He does this to gain stability, speed and also to offer less body area to the power blocker.

The second method of fighting the power block is to quickly drop the knees and scramble under or through the power blocker. We hope to scramble into the running area. At least the double team is not driving the defender away from

the designated running lane.

This type of block particularly applies to the defensive linemen, however, any member of the force unit could be subjected to the power block. The players must learn to react instinctively, quickly, and properly to the double team block.

It is obvious that the area into which the offensive team hopes to run the ball will be immediately outside of the power blocker.

The defender facing the power blocker, or short blocker in the double team will react according to the short block situation. That is, step up and expect another short block (this will not occur if there is a double team to his immediate side) or a trapper coming out of the line. (Fig 7.3)

Wedge Reaction Techniques

This type of blocking may be used by an offensive team in an attempt to obtain a few hard yards. The offensive players on both sides of the point of attack man form a wedge and drive out in a straight line. When a team uses wedge blocking to gain the small yardage they will run the ball somewhere from offensive tackle to tackle.

The force unit members must be in an extremely low hitting position, in some cases scrambling position. All their efforts must be concentrated on driving the offensive players back, at least holding them to no charge. Tackle anyone standing up. The defenders must be low and must out

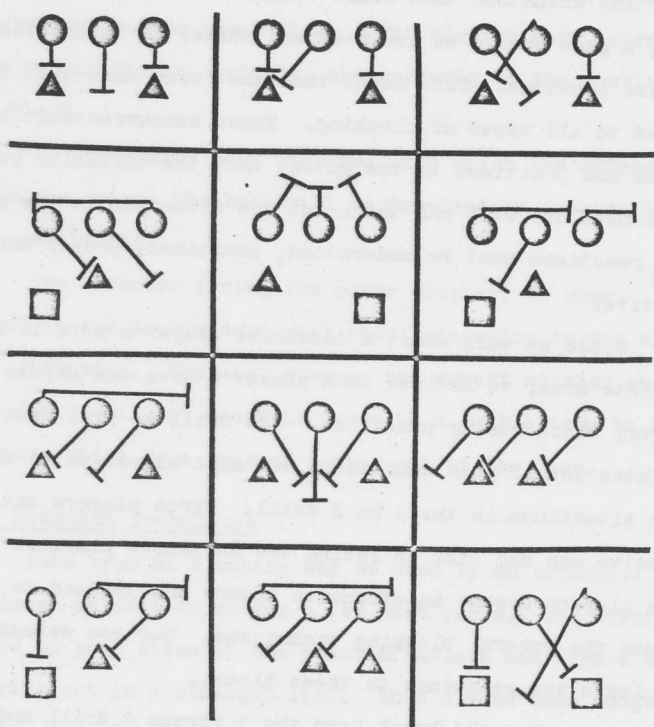
hit their opponents if they are to prevent the short gain.

Force Unit Drill Techniques

Any situation that would confront a defensive player during a game should be isolated and worked on during the practise sessions. This means that the force unit must be exposed to all types of blocking. These manouvres must be learned and practised to the extent that the defensive personnel need not stop and think out the situation in the game. Their reactions must be understood, practised, proper and effective.

Since we talk about a defensive player's keys in his immediate area, we isolate each player's area and expose him to every block during practises. The drill we find that best simulates actual game conditions and also allows us to use these situations is the 3 on 2 drill. Three players act as offensive men and line up facing two defensive players. These players assume an offensive stance and proceed to execute the general blocking techniques. Our two defenders must learn the reactions to these blocks.

A coach could break down the 3 versus 2 drill and use two men versus one defender in order to further isolate blocks and reactions. For example, rather than working the post and power block in the 3 on 2 drill, we simply have 2 players execute a post and power block on one man. Then we incorporate this skill into a 3 on 2 drill, into the scrimmage, and eventually, into the game.



Nearly all of our defensive drills are run on the snap of the ball, since during the game our defensive personnel does not know what count will initiate offensive movement. Theirs must be a visual clue and not an auditory signal.

Another drill in which the entire defensive force unit and frequently the contain unit take part in, is the reaction and pursuit drill.

The defensive unit(s) will line up a different defense, on the seven man sled. At the snap of the ball they react and take the proper angle of pursuit to a quarterback and two backfielders behind the sled.

CHAPTER 8

THE CONTAIN UNIT

The purpose and responsibility of each number of our contain unit has been defined very simply as:

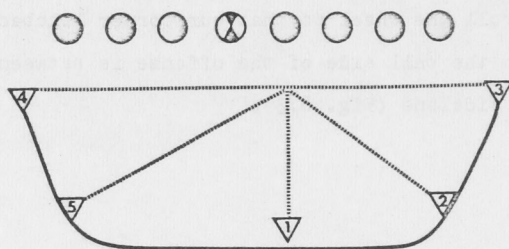
1. To stop the long touchdown.
2. To stop the pass.
3. To assist in stopping the inside and outside running game.
4. Above all else to CONTAIN our opponent's offense.

Although rules 1, 2 and 3 are listed in order of priority for our individual contain unit personnel, Rule 4 supercedes all priorities. Our approach to conditioning our players to react to the offense in this manner is both individual and unit orientated. Each technique as well as each drill for both individuals and contain unit influences the perfecting of this rule. Therefore we have come to refer to it as the ultimate rule. From the simplest stance drill to the most complex adjustment and rotation each player is primarily aware of his personal and unit responsibility and executes according to this rule.

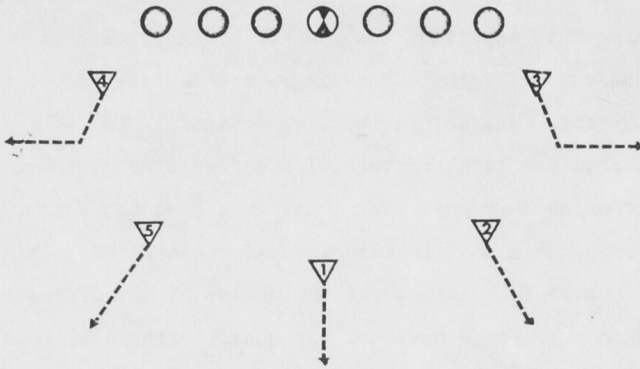
Before consideration is given to individual or specific unit techniques let us consider the overall description of the contain unit and the makeup of its players. Our approach

to teaching this aspect of the game is by chalkboard and field instruction augmented by diagrams and explanations in their playbook. We feel it is vital to instill in each player's mind the total picture of the "contain" responsibility to which they must contribute in a game situation.

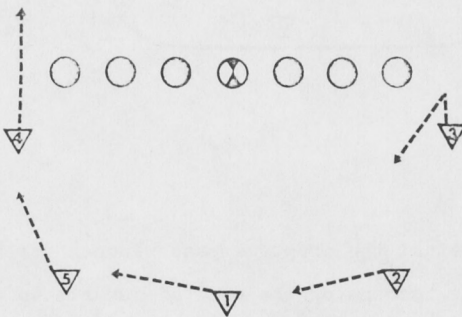
The contain unit is described as one half of a wheel with the hub of the wheel being the centre of the offensive line and each player a spoke of the wheel. The focal point for the contain unit is always the ball and we defend by either closing, rolling or opening to the ball (Fig. 8.1).



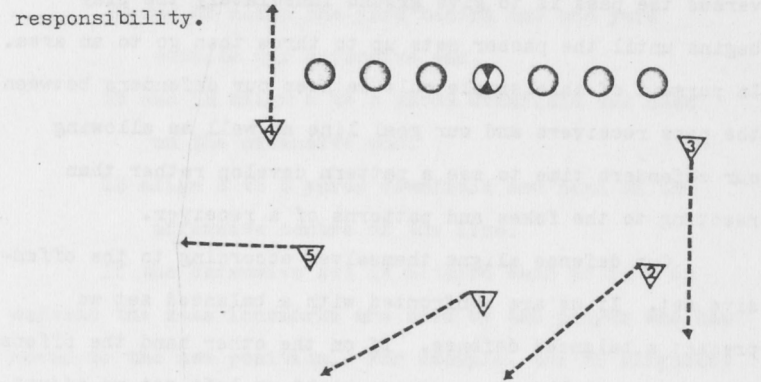
In defending against the dropback pass we open the wheel to the ball thus increasing the size of our rim to cover a greater area of the field (Fig. 8.2).



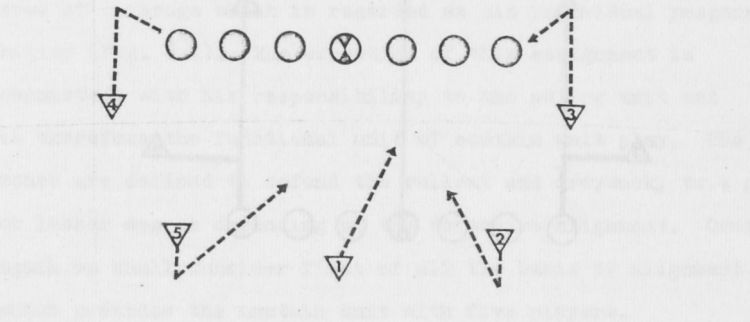
When the offense revolves to one side of the field or the other as in the sweep or rollout play we roll the wheel to meet the ball. Since our ultimate rule must not be compromised we roll the wheel so that our corner linebacker (3B or 4B) on the ball side of the offense is between the ball and the sideline (Fig. 8.3).



To cover the rollout (Fig. 8.4) which demands pass contain as well as run contain we flatten out the rim of the wheel. Our contain unit is alerted to this adjustment as the play develops, by reading and then reacting to an offensive key which will tell him how to execute his contain responsibility.



If the offense attacks to the inside we close the wheel around the ball (Fig. 8.5).



Alignments

The contain unit executes their responsibility as a zone defense. We believe that the zone gives us the best coverage for the unit to execute their responsibility as a part of the defense. The basic idea behind the zone defense versus the pass is to give ground immediately the play begins until the passer sets up to throw then go to an area. In pursuit of this simple rule we keep our defenders between the pass receivers and our goal line as well as allowing our defenders time to see a pattern develop rather than reacting to the fakes and patterns of a receiver.

Our defense aligns themselves according to the offensive set. If we are confronted with a balanced set we present a balanced defense. If on the other hand the offense chooses an unbalanced or strong right or left set we adjust to the strength. This does not alter our reaction and pursuit or coverage.

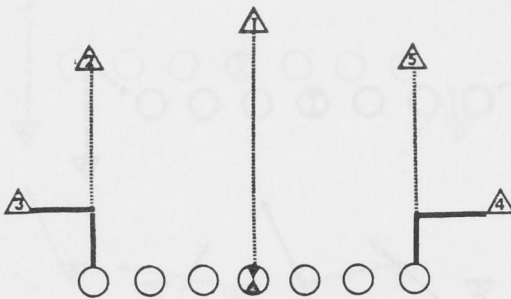


Fig. 8.6 shows the alignment of each contain unit player in relation to a balanced offensive set. The defensive call is 52 and each man has sighted an offensive landmark and positioned himself in relation to that landmark. These are:

3B and 4B align one yard behind and one yard outside our defensive end.

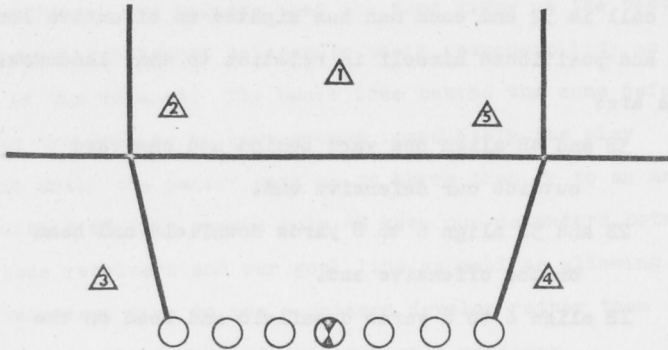
2B and 5B align 6 to 8 yards downfield and head on the offensive end.

1B align 6 to 8 yards downfield and head on the offensive centre of the line.

If the defensive set is altered such as in a 62 defense the same landmarks are used by the player who has moved to the new position. For example, the 2B alignment in the 62 defense is now the same as the 3B alignment was in the 52 defense.

Contain Unit versus The Pass

Each contain unit player is assigned a particular area of coverage which is regarded as his individual responsibility (Fig. 8.7). The execution of this assignment is consistent with his responsibility to the entire unit and is therefore the functional unit of contain unit play. The zones are defined to defend the rollout and dropback, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the defensive alignment. Once again we shall consider first of all the basic 52 alignment which provides the contain unit with five players.



Our 3 and 4 backs flat zone extends from approximately 8 yards from the line of scrimmage to the sideline. He is responsible for protecting his area against any attack such as a swing, break out, or screen. When their key shows dropback pass his primary responsibility is to guard this area against any one of these passes.

The 2 and 5 back zone begins where the 3 and 4 backs' zone ends and extends to the sideline and goal lines. Any pattern run deeper than 8 yards to this area is their responsibility. Like the 3 and 4 backs they retreat to this zone as soon as their key indicates dropback pass.

The 1B is responsible for the deep middle zone. The deep middle zone begins about 8 yards deep of the line of

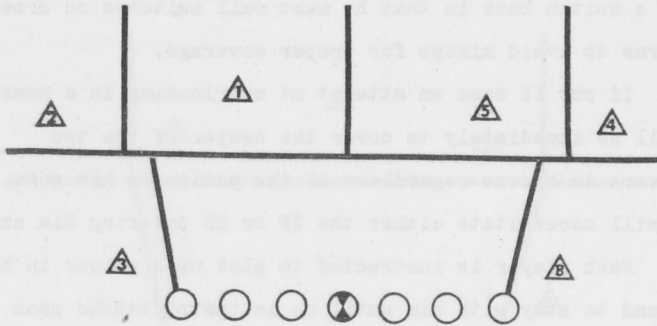
scrimmage to the goal line and from our 3B to our 4B. Our 1B is a switch back in that he must call switches on crossing patterns to avoid mixups for proper coverage.

If our 1B sees an attempt at overloading in a zone he will go immediately to cover the deeper of the two receivers in a zone regardless of the action in his zone. This will necessitate either the 2B or 5B covering his area.

Each player is instructed to pick up a player in his zone and to stay with him until he is instructed to pass him off to the next defender. If he does not have a man in his zone he will pick up a crossing receiver or a second man in a neighboring zone. This procedure requires a good deal of conversation directed by our 1B who is in the best field position to see the pattern develop and the relative positions of our contain unit.

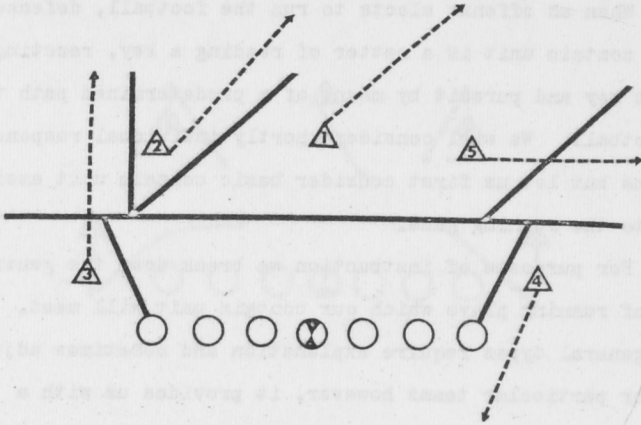
The fundamental structure of the zone defense is always the same. Adjustments are made to efficiently employ more or less men in the contain unit but this does not alter our fundamental structure, (Fig. 8.8).

The 1B and 5B each control their side of the defense as the 1B did in the 52 defense. This defense gives us an extra deep pass defender and greater efficiency in covering the whole pattern with both the 1B and the 5B securing the coverage.



Defending the rollout necessitates our rotating the rim of the contain unit. This adjustment constitutes a change in our fundamental structure to maintain efficiency in containing the ball. Fig. 8.9 shows the zone structure which we employ to defend against the rollout.

Each player will execute his zone responsibility as described in Fig. 8.9. Since the offense unbalances its strength to the rollout side, in this example to the right, our defense will adjust to the strength. This is consistent with our alignment rule and is a basic consideration. This is why we now have an additional zone on the rollout side. The offense is attempting to attack our flank therefore we need additional defensive strength here and we accomplish



this by rotating not only our personnel but our basic structure to compensate for the additional offensive attack.

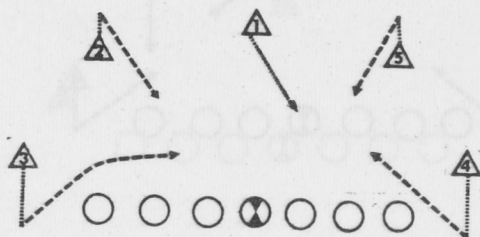
Employing the zone to defend either the dropback or rollout each player is instructed to begin execution of his responsibility in the deepest area of his zone keeping the pass defenders between himself and the line of scrimmage. Thus he will always be coming to a pass receiver when the ball is thrown and as catch is attempted. This of course will put him in a position of advantage to make a good hard tackle.

Our final rule on every pass play for every member of the defense is to take the proper angle of pursuit to the ball and stop its forward progress.

Contain Unit versus The Run

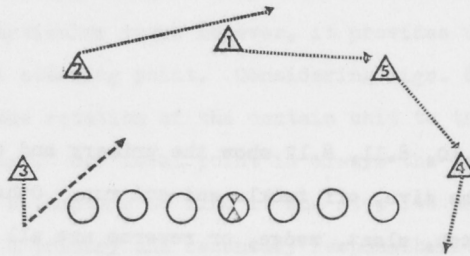
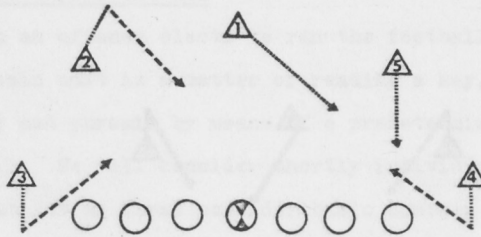
When an offense elects to run the football, defense in the contain unit is a matter of reading a key, reacting to that key and pursuit by means of a predetermined path to the football. We will consider shortly individual responsibilities but let us first consider basic contain unit assignments to the running game.

For purposes of instruction we break down the general types of running plays which our contain unit will meet. These general types require explanation and sometimes adjustment for particular teams however, it provides us with a fundamental starting point. Considering Figs. 8.5 and 8.3 we review the rotation of the contain unit to the inside and outside plays. Our focal point is always the ball and we are simply attempting to find it and stop its progress. Each player has a primary and secondary responsibility to this end. His primary responsibility is to read a key and react, this responsibility is executed on every play, his secondary responsibility is after reading and reacting to a key, to pursue the football. This responsibility is only secondary because if the play is not stopped after reading and reacting it will be in another part of the field and he must pursue (Fig. 8.10).



Figs. 8.10, 8.11, 8.12 show the primary and secondary responses to the dive, off tackle and end run. Other plays such as the pitch, slant, wedge, or reverse are all keyed, reacted and pursued according to these figures.

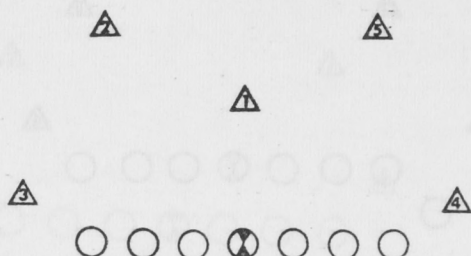
That is, although the contain unit may be forced to lengthen or shorten its primary and secondary responsibilities the end result is the same. Key and react to a type of offensive technique and pursue the football.



Contain Unit versus The Punt

Our contain unit makes up the majority if not the entire backfield of the punt return team. Fig. 8.13 shows the deployment of our players to return the punt. This facilitates two important aspects:

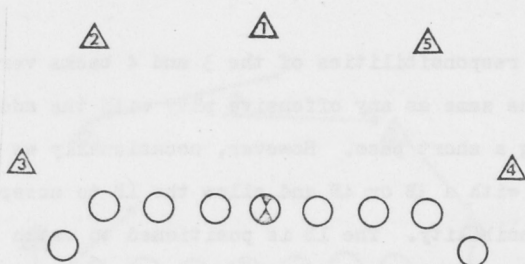
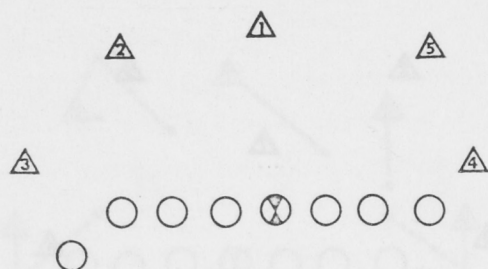
1. Defense versus the quick kick.
2. Defense versus the run or pass from punt formation.



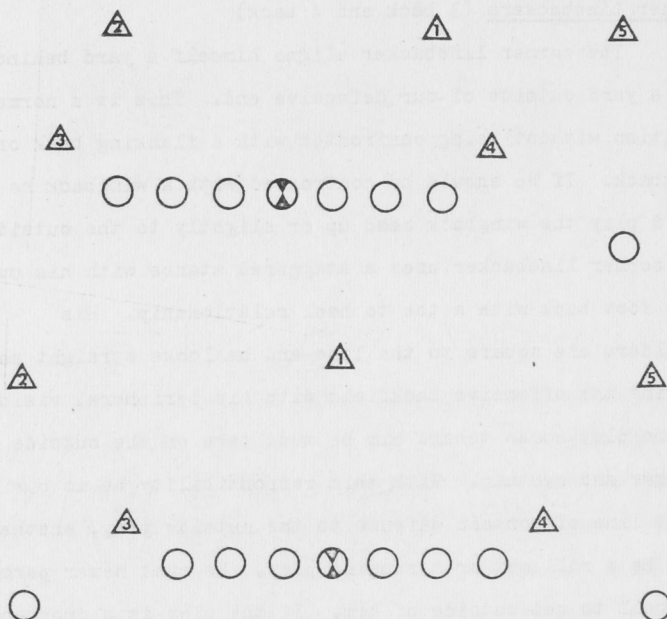
The responsibilities of the 3 and 4 backs versus the punt are the same as any offensive play with the added job of covering a short pass. However, occasionally we may rush the punter with a 3B or 4B and allow the 1B to accept his pass responsibility. The 1B is positioned to catch the short punt and the short pass. The 2B and 5B are our punt return specialists and if necessary are deep pass receivers.

Contain Unit versus Wingback and Flank Sets

If the contain unit is faced with a wingback set as in Figs. 8.14 and 8.15 we will recognize it and treat it as a balanced set. Our 1B will give him special consideration in a passing situation since the offense has the attacking potential of three receivers on the WB side. However we will rotate only minimally. Our 2 man will widen his position which will automatically move our 3B out wider. However our 2B and 1B will align as usual.



Flankers or combinations of WB and flanker demand rotation and our contain unit rotates accordingly. Fig. 8.16 shows a single flanker set. In this situation our 5B moves out head on the flanking back at about ten yards depth. Our 1B rotates to the 5B position and our adjustment is complete. The basic structure of the zone defense does not alter, depending on the field position adjustments to our zones maybe necessary but basically we are still playing a three deep zone or a 5 man contain unit.



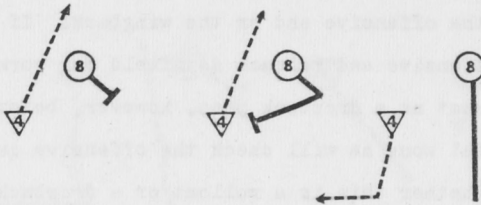
A double flanker set as shown in Fig. 8.17 demands four deep coverage. Since the offense has presented a four receiver attacking set the only way we can effectively defend is to set our deep receivers in a position of readiness to defend the deep pass. This is most effectively accomplished by the four deep zone or 6 man contain unit.

Contain Unit Techniques and KeysCorner Linebackers (3 back and 4 back)

The corner linebacker aligns himself a yard behind and a yard outside of our defensive end. This is a normal position without being confronted with a flanking back or wingback. If he should be confronted with a wingback he would play the wingback head up or slightly to the outside. Our corner linebacker uses a staggered stance with his outside foot back with a toe to heel relationship. His shoulders are square to the line and he looks straight ahead viewing the offensive backfield with his peripheral vision. If the play comes toward him he must take on the outside blocker and contain. With this responsibility he is our first line of contain defense to the outside play, whether this be a roll out or a running play. He must never permit the ball to get outside of him. If the play is a dropback pass he drops back at a 45 degree angle to the outside as the quarterback drops back in the pocket. When the quarterback sets up to throw he immediately sprints for the sideline parallel to the line of scrimmage. This action will put him at the deepest part of his zone coverage.

Keys for the 3 and 4 backs

Our corner linebacker is instructed to act from a number of different keys. The primary one being the offensive end or the wingback. That is, if we are confronted with an offense that does not use a wingback he will key the



end, however, if the offense is set with a wingback he will key the wingback. If his key blocks to the inside he immediately crosses the line of scrimmage to a point two yards deep and turns the play to the inside. Likewise if the wingback attempts to block him he will fight the pressure maintaining his outside position with his outside foot back and contact with the wingback and then go to the ball as it approaches. On dropback coverage he will bring his forward foot to the outside over his back foot and sprint at the 45 degree angle to the sideline as previously described, looking back to the passer, then when the passer sets up to throw he will plant the outside foot and sprint to the sideline. This technique you will recognize as the technique practised in the down the line drill. Besides this the technique practised in the one and one pass defense, pass reaction and pursuit are specifically applied to the execution of this responsibility.

The Initial Key for Dropback Pass

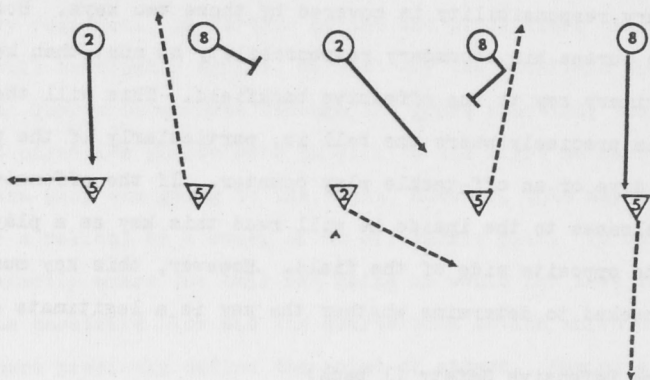
Our corner linebacker will come from his original key, that is the offensive end or the wingback. If the wingback or the offensive end release downfield our corner linebacker will react as a dropback pass, however, before he goes back to his flat zone he will check the offensive quarterback to determine whether this is a rollout or a dropback pass. Since he has two responsibilities, one for either offensive play, he must determine very rapidly whether it is a rollout or a dropback, then if it is the rollout he will reexecute his contain responsibility whereas the dropback will dictate his flat zone coverage.

Besides these primary keys a double fullback formation might give him an alternate key in terms of the onside fullback. As well as this he will always check his primary key, react and then determine backfield flow which will be a secondary key for each of the corner linebackers.

The Defensive Halfbacks (2 back and 5 back)

The defensive halfback aligns himself between six and eight yards deep on the outside shoulder of the offensive end. His only adjustment to this alignment is if he is confronted with a flanking back on his side. In this case he would align himself head up with the flanking back. His stance is a quarter eagle stance with the outside foot back and his shoulders squared to the line of scrimmage. He will key the offensive end or flanking back.

Keys for the 2 and 5 Backs



If the offensive end blocks to the inside he will react by coming quickly to the line of scrimmage, on the inside of our corner linebacker. If our halfback is adjusted to line up with the flanking back he will then key the flanking back and likewise if the flanking back blocks to the inside he will react by coming quickly into the line of scrimmage. If the offensive end releases downfield for a pass he will look through the offensive backfield to determine whether the pass is a rollout or dropback. If the pass is a dropback the halfback will cover the deep sideline zone. If the pass is a rollout he will sprint to the sideline at the deepest part of his intermediate zone. The halfbacks primary responsibility is to defend against the pass, first and foremost, and as a secondary responsibility his pursuit will lead him to cover the running play. His

key, that is the offensive end or the flanking back, will only tell him whether the play is a pass or run. Thus, his primary responsibility is covered by these two keys. However, to pursue his secondary responsibility he must then key his primary key to the offensive backfield. This will then tell him precisely where the ball is, particularly if the play is a dive or an off-tackle play counter. If the offensive end releases to the inside he will read this key as a play to the opposite side of the field. However, this key must be checked to determine whether the key is a legitimate one.

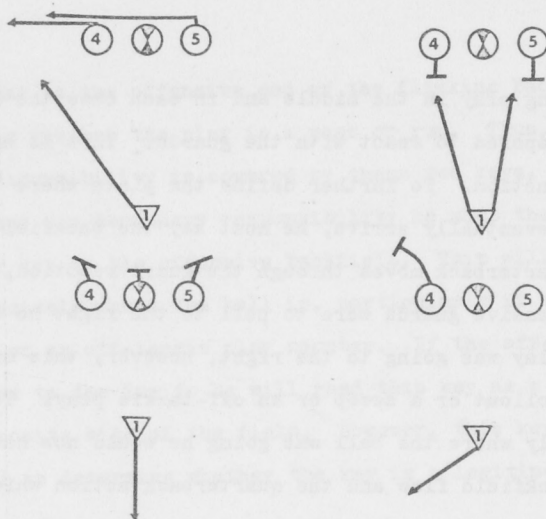
The Defensive Safety (1 back)

Since we employ a three deep zone defense basically our 1 back will find himself in this alignment the majority of the time. In this set he will align himself six to eight yards deep of the line of scrimmage and head up with the middle man on the offensive line. He will assume a quarter eagle stance with his toes even.

Keys for the Defensive 1 Back

The defensive 1 back will react to the key of the offensive guard as a primary responsibility. The guards will tell him the type of play and also may tell him the direction of the play. If the guards pull to the right, the 1 back will know that the play is run to the right, if the guards drop back to pass protect the 1 back will know it is a dropback pass. If the guards charge out he will know that it

is a running play in the middle and in each case the 1 back will be prepared to react with the guards. This is his primary reaction. To further define the place where the ball will eventually arrive, he must key the backfield flow and the quarterback moves through the guard reaction, that is, if the offensive guards were to pull to the right he would know the play was going to the right, however, this may be either a rollout or a sweep or an off-tackle play. To determine exactly where the ball was going he would now have to key the backfield flow and the quarterback action which would then more precisely define the point of attack. Having a toes even stance his first step would be in the direction of his key with the foot closest to that area. For example, if the play were a running play to the right he would step with his left foot and take his proper angle of pursuit through the 5 back's position. On route he would determine whether it were a dive, off-tackle, sweep or pitch and then align himself to the ball. If the side of the offensive rotation and cover his deep middle zone from the deepest portion back to the shallowest portion. If the guards indicate a dropback pass and the quarterback in fact did drop back he would step back with one foot and step over his backfoot with the front leg thus running toward the deep middle zone employing the technique involved in the down-the-line drill.



Contain Unit Drills

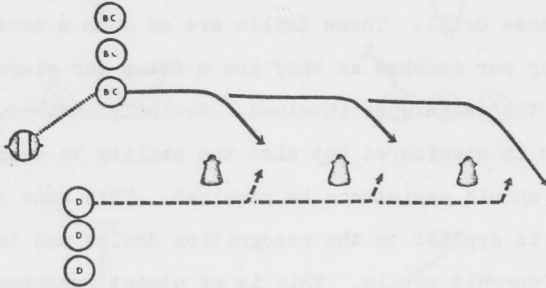
The drills which are about to be presented are used by the contain unit as a whole. We are not attempting to practise individual technique here at all. If they appear as a practise of individual techniques it is only because the techniques in this case are common to each position and we wish our players to know that each one of them is responsible for a similar technique so that when a four back is attempting to make a sideline tackle the 5 back immediately behind him knows exactly how he is going to execute that sideline tackle. With this approach we believe that the 5 back in this situation would be in a better position to assist the 4 back should he need help to complete the play. We use each of the drills presented here daily. The form changes somewhat depending upon our daily or even weekly

objective with regard to the drills. That is, in the early season a greater emphasis would be placed on things like the sideline tackle, the down-the-line drill and one on one pass defense drill. These drills are as much a screening device for our coaches as they are a setup for players to practise the techniques involved. Not only individual execution is considered but also the ability to assist one another, should assistance be required. This same coaching approach is applied to the recognition drills and the reaction pursuit drills. This is of utmost importance since the contain unit and the members of the contain unit are completely interdependent. As outlined in the earliest part of the chapter, in describing the wheel which the contain unit describes and the spokes on the wheel and their particular responsibilities. In evaluating the effectiveness of the contain unit during practise we are always concerned with its effectiveness as a group and the ability of the players to compensate when compensation is necessary.

Side-line Tackling

- Purpose - to develop and practise the proper angle of approach in executing a side-line tackle.
- to practise the technique of the side tackle.

The Execution of the Drill



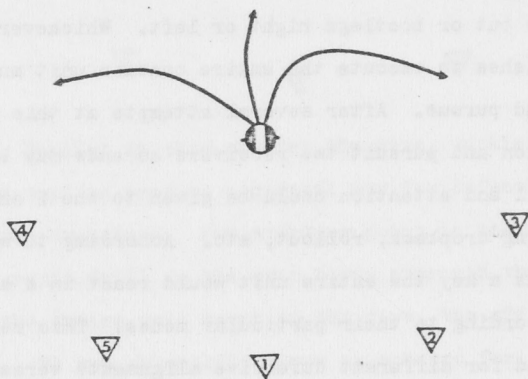
The quarterback hands or pitches the ball to the ball carrier who proceeds to run at an angle toward the three dummies and selects an alley upfield (Fig. 8.21). The defender starts out with the ball carrier keeping him at an angle between himself and the sideline so that when the ball carrier turns up into his running alley the defender can meet him at the line of the dummies or the line of scrimmage. A common fault in this drill as in game situations, is that the defender will tend to overrun the ball carrier and be forced to stop his forward momentum to come back to make the tackle. We want to avoid this situation and this drill helps to accentuate the situation. After a tackle is made the defender goes to the end of the ball carrier line, the ball carrier becomes the defender and the drill continues the same way. The drill should be run so that

tackling is done to the right and to the left. The ball carrier is coached in lowering his shoulder and making contact with the shoulder as he turns into the running alley. He is also instructed to turn back in the direction from which he came when contact is made. This puts the defender at a greater disadvantage, particularly if he has overrun the ball carrier's running alley and tends to further emphasize a poor angle of pursuit.

Pass Reaction and Pursuit

- Purpose - to determine by recognition of keys the type of pass to be executed.
- to react and pursue in the proper directions.

Execution of the Drill



The drill may be set up to show a number of different keys, particularly the guards, the receivers and the passer. That is, the contain unit may react to a key by any of these particular players depending on their respective positions. The 5 back for example would react to the key by the offensive end or flanking back to determine whether the play is a pass or run and then key the passer who would tell him whether its rollout, dropback or bootleg. This same procedure applies to each of the other members of the contain unit and this drill is designed to practise this particular phase of the game.

Progression

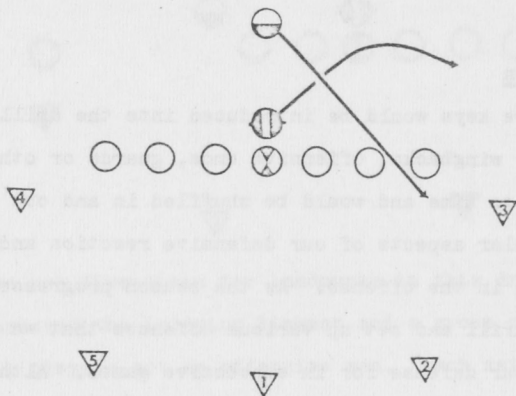
In the introduction of the drill we simply use a passer to make the execution of the play more obvious. The passer simply lines himself head up with the defensive 1 back, simulates taking a ball from the centre and either drops back, rolls out or bootlegs right or left. Whichever technique he wishes to execute the entire contain unit must react to and pursue. After several attempts at this skeletal pass reaction and pursuit two receivers as ends may be included in the drill and attention could be given to the 2 and 5 back covering dropback, rollout, etc. According to what the ends show as a key the entire unit would react in a similar fashion according to their particular zones. This same drill is also used for different defensive alignments versus the various types of pass plays. He may also be effectively

used to cover broken play situations. For example, dropback and then a rollout or a rollout and then a run, or even to a greater extreme a rollout to the right and a field reversal and a rollback to the left.

Run Reaction and Pursuit

Purpose - to practise the reaction and pursuit to different types of running plays.

Execution of the Drill



Earlier in this chapter the dive, tackle, sweep play setups that we used in a general way for defensive recognition was explained. Our starting point in the run reaction and pursuit drill is the same basic approach that is, to have the entire unit react to the dive, the off tackle, the sweep. We use automobile tires as spacers for the offensive line to allow our contain unit to have a landmark for setting

up the drill efficiently before we run each time. A quarter-back or somebody to hand off the ball is placed in the middle of the offensive line and one ball carrier is used about three yards behind him. The ball is simply handed off to the back in a position to take the ball and he executes one of the different offensive running patterns that we may meet during the season. The entire contain unit then acts to display the primary and secondary reaction and pursuit moves. This is repeated of course to both the right and left.

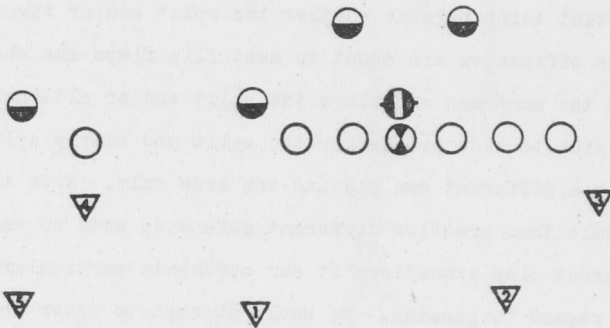
Progression

Live keys would be introduced into the drill by including either wingbacks, offensive ends, guards or other backs from time to time and would be shuffled in and out to work on particular aspects of our defensive reaction and pursuit to the run in the offense. As the season progresses we would use this drill and set up various offenses that we were planning our defense for in successive games. Although the form of the drill would change with different formations that we would be confronted with such as a double fullback or wingback offense, the basic purpose of the drill does not change. This procedure avoids setting up a drill to teach basically the same thing, but allows us the freedom to set up different types of offenses for us to practise the reaction and pursuit against.

Offensive Recognition Drill

Purpose - to practise recognizing different offensive sets and specifically different combinations of wingbacks, flankingbacks and setbacks.

Execution of the Drill



We use five tires for landmarks in this drill. These five represent the interior linemen and a group of from 5 to 7 ball players act as offensive men. Each setting up in a number of different combinations of setback, wingback, flankback and split ends. The contain unit must adjust to the setups and rotate according to the offensive set. The most basic part is to recognize and distinguish between the different offensive positions, such as a wingback, a flankback and setbacks and a split end. In this very fundamental approach to the drill we employ this drill throughout the season to recognize specific personnel of upcoming opponents,

for example, Joe Harris may be a wingback for our next opponent. His number is known to our defensive contain unit men and they would recognize not only a wingback but a Joe Harris number 41 of our next opponent. The same thing is practised in terms of our flankingback and setbacks and any combination or any rotation that our future opponent would go through to devise a particular set. Another important thing here is whether the split end or tight end of the offense we are about to meet flip flops and whether it is the same man who plays the split end or alternates from side to side or whether the split end simply splits and is a different man playing one side only. From this set we would then practise different defensive sets as well as different play executions of our opponents particularly with regard to passing. We would attempt to cover the offensive sets as thoroughly as possible to either side and illustrate the pattern with which our opponents change the offensive set. Thus our contain unit would not have to wait until the offense set up at the line of scrimmage to recognize a particular set but could attempt to do it as the offense broke the huddle depending on where the split end went and where the flankingback went etc.

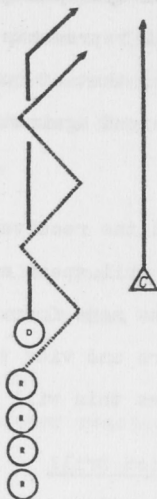
Drills to Develop Individual Technique

Down the Line

Purpose - to develop agility, coordination and balance

- to develop the technique of close quarter's pass defence.

Execution of the Drill



The drill is executed in pairs, a receiver running a zig zag pass pattern five yards on either side of the yard line. The defender begins in a quarter eagle stance, about four yards deep of the receiver when the receiver begins his run the defender turns and runs attempting to keep the four yards distance between himself and the receiver. With the receiver starting to cut to the right as in the illustration, the defender will begin by rotating the hips to his left and bring the right leg over the left. When the receiver moves to cut across the yard line the defender must rotate his hips to the right by planting his left foot deep and swinging his right foot over his left and then

begin running again by stepping with the left foot over the right. Each time the receiver cuts the defender must rotate so that he is always facing the receiver.

The drill represents the most difficult physical part of pass defense, that of cutting and maintaining speed to successfully defend against a receiver.

Progression

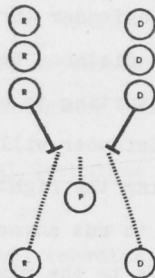
Instruct the receiver to run at half speed at first progressing to full speed each time the drill is used. After the receiver has made four cuts switch to allow receivers to become defenders and vice versa. Repeat the entire drill at least four times this will give each defender two runs.

Pass Interception Drill

Purpose - to practise reaction to and scrambling for the ball.

- to provide close contact struggle for the football after it was thrown.

Execution of the Drill



The passer throws the ball between the receiver and defender. The two players go for the ball attempting to catch it and sprint back to a line behind the passer. The passer varies the throw from high to low and right and left. If a ball is fumbled, both players interpret it as a live ball and scramble to determine possession.

Progression

Include tackling in the drill, that is when the ball is caught have the other player tackle him.

Stance Drill (Stationary and Action)

Purpose - to align the body for proper reaction and pursuit.

Execution of the Drill



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Each player assumes a stationary quarter eagle stance according to his field position -- the coach makes correction and suggestions for improvement.

The action part of the drill begins with a "Go" command by the coach. Each player turns the motors on and runs on the spot. The drill stops on a command and stance is checked again.

Progression

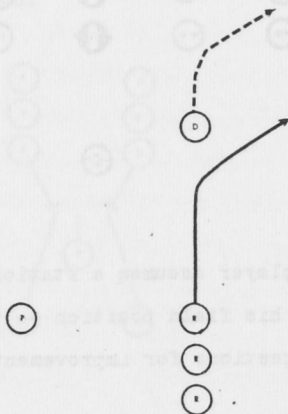
The action part of the drill involves reacting to a direction hand signal. The players follow the hand signal either right, left, forward or backward maintaining the same body alignment throughout the drill and moving with motors on.

One on One Pass Defense

Purpose - to practise proper field position in relation to the pass receiver.

- to tackle the receiver who has caught the ball.
- to knock down an attempted pass.
- to intercept a pass.

Execution of the Drill



The defender aligns himself in his usual defensive position. The receiver usually runs a pattern into his zone but the defender is instructed not to depend on this. The receiver and passer may decide on a pattern themselves or be given a certain pattern to run. When the receiver releases the defensive back turns his motors on to get his cleats free of the ground and to be able to move in any direction quickly. The passer may throw by either dropback, rollout or bootleg action and the defender must react as he would to cover his responsibility.

The defender will always pursue our first purpose of the drill, that is proper field position, then he will attempt to knock down or intercept the ball, if this is not possible he will tackle the receiver. The drill is employed with each of the contain unit players practising in their own zone. Pass routes are adjusted for each defensive position.

Progression

We begin by a two hand touch rather than tackling the receiver, then provide the defender with an air dummy so that he can attempt to knock down the receiver and finally allow the tackler to tackle the receiver.

CHAPTER 9

TEAM DEFENSE

The successful selection and execution of the defense will depend to a large degree upon two aspects: these are

1. Suiting the defense to the particular offensive style of football employed in your league.
2. The selection of personnel for the particular positions within the type of defense to be used.

A consideration of the right type of player for a given position was discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. We will now deal with our selection of the type of defense that we employ to suit the particular offenses with which we will meet in our conference.

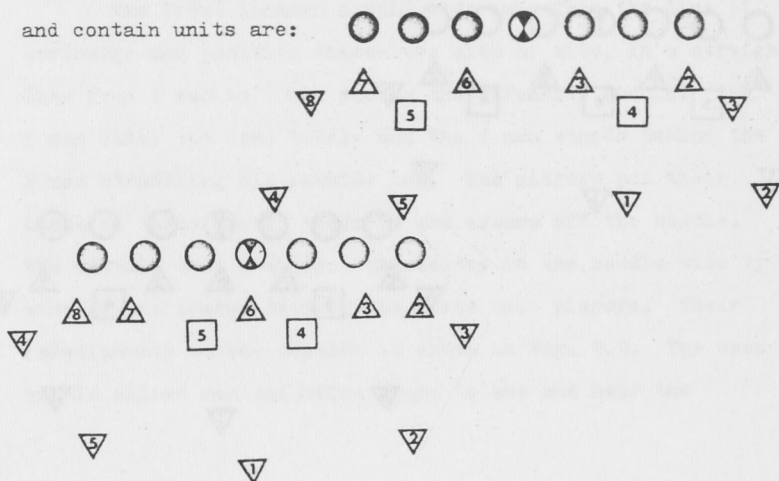
Because of the variation of emphasis from team to team with regard to either passing or running we attempt to adopt a standard defense which is flexible enough to change in a given playing situation and also for different opponents.

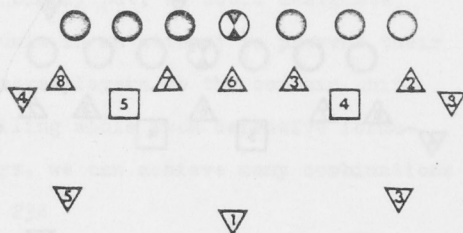
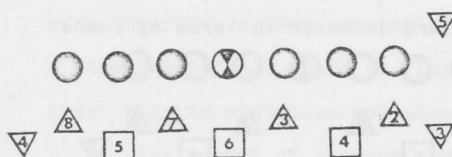
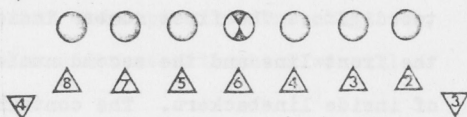
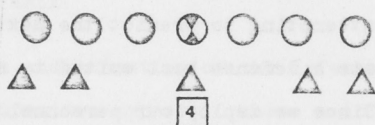
The number of players comprising the force unit will vary according to the field situation and to what we are attempting to accomplish. Simply put, we could designate more players to the force unit in an attempt to prevent their running game, or allocate more players to the contain unit to defend the pass. By calling whole team defensive formations and/or players' numbers, we can achieve many combinations

or modifications of the defense. Certain defenses are better suited to cope with particular offensive attacking methods and as the offense adjusts so will our defense. We are attempting to predict the next offensive move and incorporate a defense best suited to stop the gain from that play. Since we deploy our personnel to compensate for expected offensive action we will be lacking in other areas. The defensive players in these weakened areas must be made aware of their increased responsibilities. They must be more alert and active to their particular situation and the consequence of an attack in their area.

Our whole team defensive formation is designated by two digits. The first number indicates the number of men on the front line and the second number allocates the number of inside linebackers. The contain unit is comprised of the remaining personnel.

Some examples of standard defenses in terms of force and contain units are:





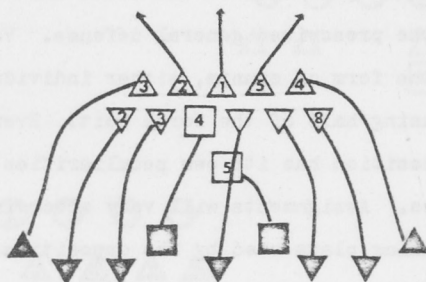
As mentioned, further modifications occur within the force and contain units according to the offensive formation. These modifications can be individually set, or in conjunction with a teammate, or half of the force unit may deviate slightly from the prescribed general defense. Variations can also take the form of stunts, either individually, with a teammate or using half of the force unit. Every defensive formation and position has its own peculiarities and specific responsibilities. Assignments will vary according to the passing and running plays used by the opposition.

Huddle

We have our defensive team go into a huddle between the offensive plays. This allows us to give the type of defense we are using for the next play and also we attempt to bind the players together into a determined and proud defensive unit.

The front linemen simply step away from the line of scrimmage and position themselves side by side, in a straight line from 2 man to 8 man facing the offensive huddle. The 5 man faces the open huddle and the 4 man stands behind the 2 man straddling his outside leg. The players put their hands on their knees, heads up and square off the huddle. The contain unit positions themselves in the huddle side by side in the spaces between the force unit players. Their relationship to one another is shown in Fig. 9.9. The open huddle allows our defensive squad to see and hear the

defensive call by the 5 man and at the same time view the offensive huddle.



We number our defensive personnel and refer to them by their number. Our right defensive end is called the two man, the left end is the 8 man. Tackles are the 3 man and 7 man. The middle guard is referred to as the 6 man and the linebackers are the 4 man and the 5 man. In the contain unit our safety is called the 1 back, the defensive halfbacks are referred to as the 2 and 5 backs and the corner linebackers are referred to as the 3 and 4 backs. The positioning and alignment of both force and contain units are shown in Figs. 9.1 to 9.8 for our different defensive formations.

As can be seen from Fig. 9.9 the deployment for the defense is direct from the huddle and is accomplished with

a minimum of adjusting. Each player is able to observe the offense as they break from the huddle, thus the offensive adjustments are observed immediately. After the break from the huddle the 4 man, 5 man and 1 back will alert their units to the game situation (down, yardage, etc.) and suggest play possibilities according to our scoring reports and previous plays run.

To begin again we normally set in our basic defense which as previously mentioned, is determined by our defensive personnel and the types of offenses that we meet in our conference. This basic defense is shown in Fig. 9.1 and we call it the 52 ^{OK}Key. We employ this defense because of our defensive personnel and because it has proven to be the best utility defense for covering both pass and run. Once our opponents establish their type of play, either pass or run or particular pass or run plays, we then adjust the defense by employing the variations shown in Figs. 9.2 to 9.8. Further adjustments and stunts within these defenses can be employed as mentioned in Chapters 7 and 8.

On goal line and short yardage situations, our force unit will position themselves in an 80 defense. We allocate a defensive player into every hole or gap along the line of scrimmage. The defensive 3 back would assume a position outside the offensive end, our 2 man would situate between the offensive tackle and end. Each remaining member of the force unit would fill gaps along the line (see Fig. 9.5).

Their job is to charge hard on the snap of the ball, attempting to penetrate into the offensive barrier. They must hit anything and anybody -- there is no time to differentiate between ball carrier and faking back.

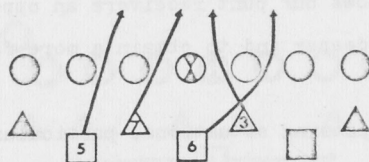
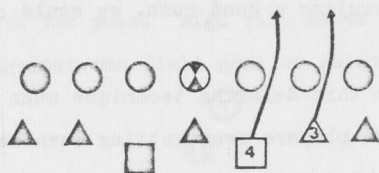
If the short yardage situation occurs approximately outside of our 30 yard line we may adopt a 70 defense. The 80 and 70 defense would only be used on third down or when the offensive team is close to the touchdown area (see Figs. 9.5 and 9.7).

Frequently, we used the pinching charge in the short yardage situation. We assume the offense is going to run the ball somewhere from offensive tackle to tackle. Our defensive action should serve to plug up all the holes along the front line.

The contain unit in goal line and short yardage situations still retain the contain responsibility (Figs. 9.5 and 9.7). Their alignment now would be considerably closer to the line of scrimmage because the emphasis now is on run rather than pass. However they must not avoid their basic responsibility of containing the offense. This is particularly true of our 2 back and 4 back who are the first line of contain responsibility. In particular their responsibility is to contain the sweep or pitch action run as the force unit has been deployed to plug up the middle, putting more pressure on the 2 and 4 backs contain responsibility.

Strategies

We do not use many whole team stunts during a game, rather, we use individual or poised stunts. The 1, 2 and 5 backs do not blitz. The other members of the force unit, the 3 back and 4 back do poised stunting techniques in conjunction with some member of the force unit. Most of our stunts involve the blitzing of a linebacker into the offensive territory, hoping to stop the play before it gains momentum. To do this, we use a linebacker and a lineman in his immediate area. We use cross and blitz stunts. The linebacker wishing to stunt, calls his own number and the number of the lineman he wishes to act with.



Calling the lineman's number before the linebacker number indicated a blitz, charging through the gap. If the linebacker's number was called first it would indicate a cross charge. There are times during the game when we deem it advisable to delay or "hold-up" some or all members of the offensive team.

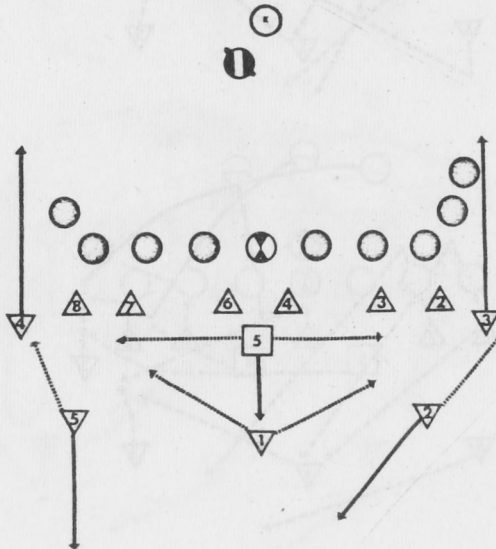
This may apply in passing situations, particularly when our defensive 2 or 8 men can deliver a blow to the offensive end, wingback or slotback. By doing this we prevent the offensive player from getting out into his pattern soon enough to be eligible for the pass. If, coupled with this delaying action, the defensive linemen can hurry the quarterback by executing a good rush, we would control their passing game.

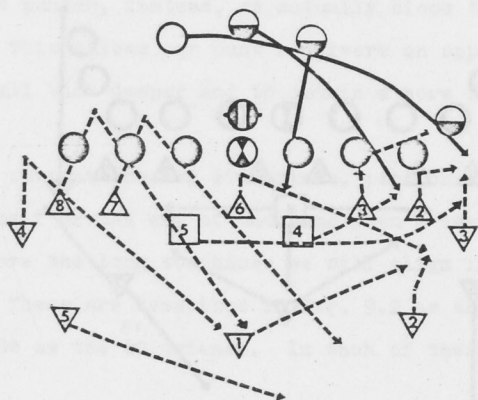
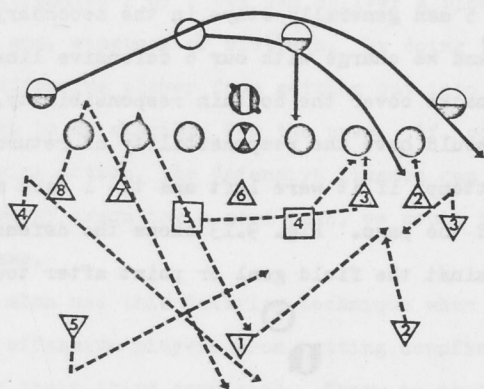
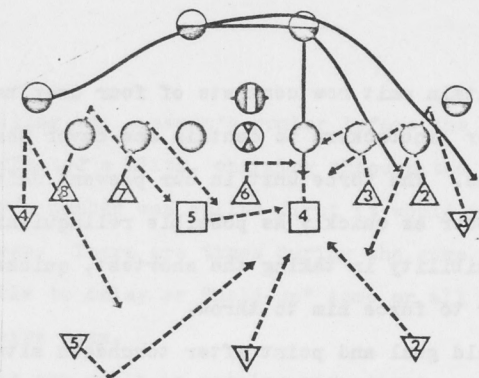
We also use this delaying technique when we hope to delay the offensive players from getting downfield too quickly on their third down kick. There is no total rush put on the punter, instead, we actually block the offensive linemen. This allows our punt receivers an opportunity to run the ball back deeper and to obtain a more favorable field position.

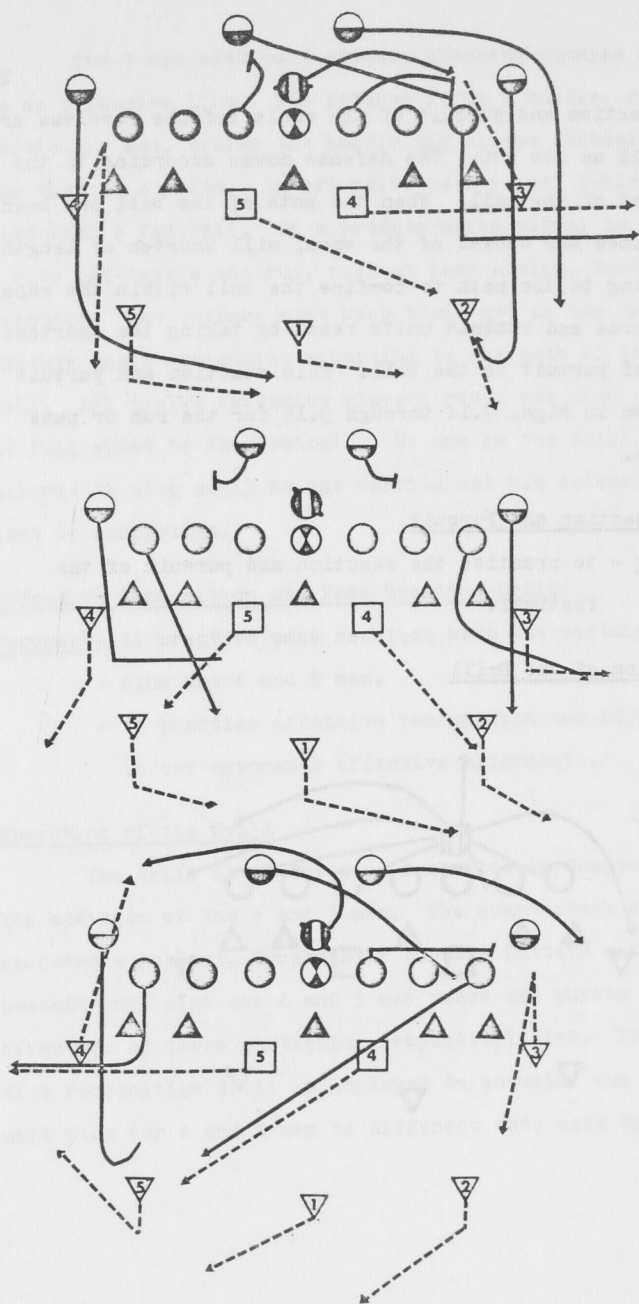
In obvious passing situations, particularly near the end of a half or the end of the game when a team is attempting to score the long touchdown we will align in a prevent defense. These are described in Fig. 9.2 as the 42 defense and Fig. 9.4 as the 60 defense. In each of these defensive

calls our contain unit now consists of four deep backs and the two corner linebackers to contain and cover the swing and flat zones. The force unit in our prevent defense must force the passer as quickly as possible relinquishing any other responsibility in taking the shortest, quickest route to the passer to force him to throw.

In field goal and point after touchdown situations the force unit again takes the shortest quickest route to the kicker. The 5 man generally stays in the secondary to aid pass or run and we charge with our 6 defensive lineman. The 3 and 4 backs cover the contain responsibility. The 2 and 5 backs would have the responsibility of returning the field goal attempt if it were left and the 1 back stays in closer to aid the pass. Fig. 9.13 shows the defensive alignment against the field goal or point after touchdown.





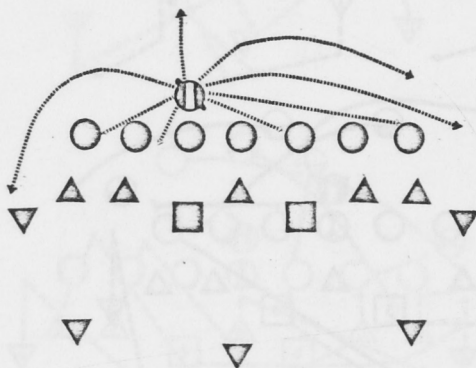


The reaction and pursuit of the whole defense revolves around the ball as its hub. The defense moves according to the movement of the ball. When the path of the ball has been determined the spokes of the wheel will shorten or lengthen according to the path to confine the ball within the wheel. Both force and contain units react by taking the shortest angle of pursuit to the ball. This reaction and pursuit is shown in Figs. 9.14 through 9.19 for the run or pass actions.

Team Reaction and Pursuit

Purpose - to practise the reaction and pursuit of the football.

Execution of the Drill



The 7 man sled or 7 standup blocking dummies are used as an offensive line. The defense forms a huddle, calls the particular set, breaks the huddle and aligns themselves on the sled or dummies. An offensive back is set behind the sled with a football. On a predetermined signal he executes a dive off-tackle end run, rollout pass action, bootleg or dropback. The defense must keep their eye on the ball and execute their assignment according to the path of the football. All twelve defensive players react and then pursue at full speed to the football. No one in the drill is allowed to stop until he has carried out his defensive assignment to completion.

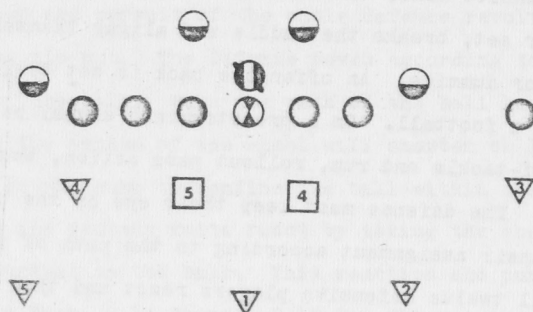
Offensive Recognition and Pass Reaction Drill

Purpose - to practise pass reaction with the contain unit plus the 4 and 5 men.

- to practise offensive recognition and adjustment to our opponents offensive alignments.

Execution of the Drill

The drill is employed as described in Chapter 6 with the addition of the 4 and 5 men. The quarterback simply executes a rollout, dropback or bootleg pattern and the contain unit plus the 4 and 5 men react and pursue in the direction of their particular responsibilities. The offensive recognition drill is employed to acquaint our contain unit plus our 4 and 5 men to different sets used by our



opponents. The defensive players go into a huddle and call a particular defensive set, break from the huddle and then are confronted with various offensive sets. They align themselves according to the particular offensive set consistent with their defensive call. They identify by calling aloud the particular variations in the offensive sets. For example, a flanker to the left, a slotback to the right, a split end to the right as described in Fig. 9.15.

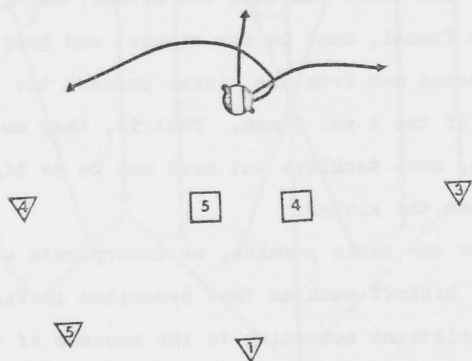
The offensive QB would then execute a particular play from that offensive set. The defensive contain unit and the 4 and 5 men would then react and pursue as previously described.

Defensive Reaction and Pursuit to Opposition Plays

Purpose - to practise reaction and pursuit of our opponents offensive plays both pass and run.

Execution of the Drill

A group of our players are selected to run our opponents offense both running and passing plays. The entire defense will huddle and call a particular play. The selected offensive group will attempt to run plays in a selected sequence according to what our opponent has shown in the previous games. This becomes a scrimmage situation to allow the coaches to assess our defensive capability in terms of the particular offense that we are practising. This gives us a physically objective assessment of our defense to our opponent's style of play.



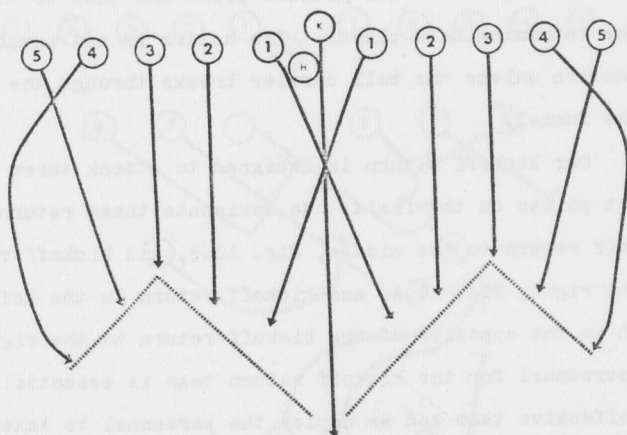
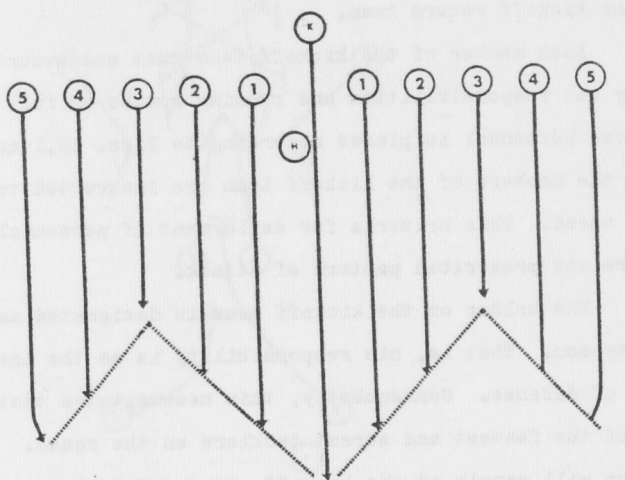
CHAPTER 10

THE KICKOFF AND RETURN

The primary objective of the kickoff team is to kick the ball deep into the opponent's territory and hold them at an unfavourable field position. The basic premise by which we accomplish this objective is to have our 5-man contain the football from the outside in, our kicker is the spearhead of the force in the middle and we attempt to funnel the ball to the right or left of the kicker as described in Fig. 10.1.

To accomplish this funneling effect we select our personnel such that the 4th and 5th men from the kicker possess characteristics of our defensive 2 and 8 men. They must be fast and aggressive individuals and accept contain responsibility. The third man from the kicker, being at the mouth of the funnel, must be our biggest and best tackler. The first and second men from the kicker possess the physical characteristics of the 4 and 5 man. That is, they must be fast, aggressive, sure tacklers but need not be as big as the third man from the kicker.

Holding to our basic premise, we incorporate a number of variations of kickoff such as that described in Fig. 10.2. We employ the variations according to the success of the



kickoff returns. We use variations of kickoffs in an attempt to confuse prescribed blocking assignments of the members of the kickoff return team.

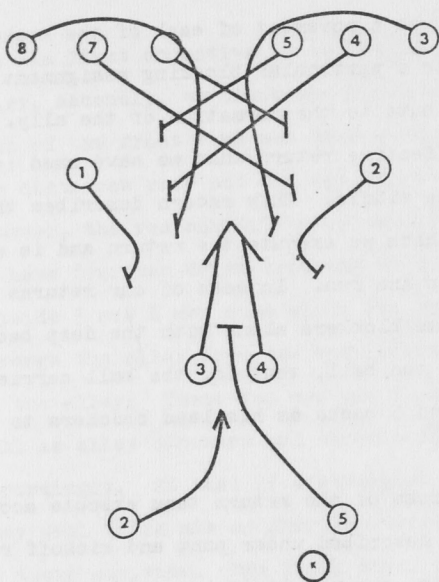
Each member of the kickoff team must endeavour to carry out responsibilities and running routes at full speed. Because personnel is placed according to Figs. 10.1 and 10.2 the members of the kickoff team are instructed to run full speed. This criteria for deployment of personnel will insure the prescribed pattern of attack.

The holder on the kickoff team is designated as our safety man. That is, his responsibility is as the last line of defense. Consequently, this necessitates that he be one of the fastest and surest tacklers on the squad. The holder will remain at the kickoff point and just to the path of the returning ball player. The holder is not involved in the action unless the ball carrier breaks through the point of the funnel.

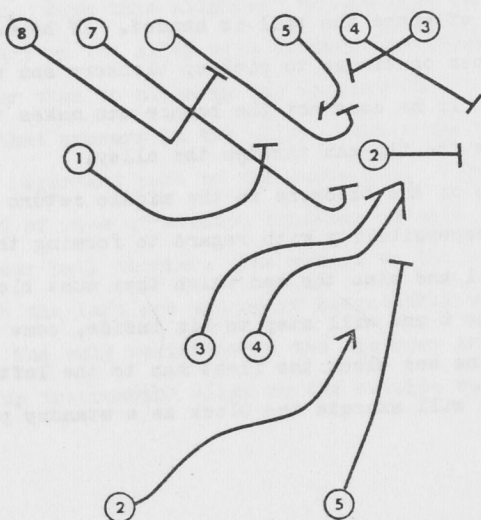
Our kickoff return is designed to attack three different points on the field. We designate these returns as kickoff return to the middle, Fig. 10.3, and kickoff return to the right, Fig. 10.4, and kickoff return to the left which is the opposite of the kickoff return to the right. The personnel for the kickoff return team is essentially our offensive team and we deploy the personnel to take advantage of their particular attributes. Each of the patterned returns is designed to set up a running lane for our ball

5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5

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5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5



carrier. This involves a movement of each of the kickoff return men to execute a particular blocking assignment in an attempt to contribute to the formation of the alley. The simplest and most effective return that we have used is the kickoff return to the middle. This return describes the basic premise upon which we execute the return and is also the easiest to set up and run. In each of our returns the 3 and 4 backs are lead blockers along with the deep back who does not receive the ball, that is, the ball carrier will depend on the 3, 4 and 5 backs as his lead blockers to start up the alley.

The 2 and 5 backs of the return team execute according to the technique described under punt and kickoff return in Chapter 2. That is, one man is designated as fly and the other man designated as a bounce. The fly man as he does for the punt, attempts to catch the ball on the fly regardless of where the ball is headed. If he makes the catch he then continues to pick up blockers and run through the alley. If he does not the bounce man makes the catch and follows the fly man through the alley.

Each of the blockers in the middle return have a specific responsibility with regard to forming the alley first of all and also the man which they must block. For example, the 6 man will step to his inside, come across the kicker's line and block the first man to the left of the kicker. He will execute the block as a standup pass block

but his first objective is to get to the point to form the alley, secondly, to block the first man past the kicker. Each of the front line men have a similar responsibility. The distances vary and the man which they block varies, however, the responsibility is essentially the same until we have four men criss-crossing to form the alley and the outside 3 and 8 men come along the restraining line, up through the alley from the restraining line to the deep end of the alley. These two men are considered cleanup men as well as alley blockers and execute their responsibility accordingly. So that if a straggler breaks through the alley they will block him as they proceed down through the alley to their position. The 2 man and 1 back turn to the side at the kickoff and set up at the deepest portion of the alley also in a pass-blocking technique to protect that end of the alley. With this alignment of blockers our 3 and 4 backs start up the alley with no definite blocking assignment other than to clean up any interference to our ball carrier that appears in the alley. These two players are the most important part of the execution. Important from the point of view of cleanup blocking as well as lead blocking for our ball carrier. The return to the right and the return to the left are set up in essentially the same manner. The only variation is the distance involved in setting up the running alley to the outside rather than

up the middle. The specific responsibility of each player in the kickoff return right are described in Fig. 10.4.

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